SALVATION THROUGH ATONEMENT

By Griffith Roberts, M.A., Dean of Bangor

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SALVATION THROUGH ATONEMENT

Ten Instructions

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Salvation through Atonement

INSTRUCTION I

The Nature of Sin

Sin is that which made the Atonement necessary. We presume not to assert that the death on the Cross was the only way in which it was possible for God to raise fallen humanity ; it is enough for us that Christ testified of Himself that "it behoved Him to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory." [1] But it has been asked, Would the Son of God have become Incarnate if man had not sinned ? Holy Scripture does not answer the question ; nor has the Church spoken on the subject with a united and authoritative voice. There has been from early times a school of thought inclined to maintain that the Incarnation was not the consequence of the Fall ; but that it was a part of God's fixed and original plan for revealing Himself to His reasonable creature, and for bringing him into closer union with Himself. It may be said, however, that a larger school of thought has taken the opposite view. One thing is clearly taught in Holy Writ—it was

[1] S. Luke xxiv. 26, R.V.

sin which brought the Son of God to the Cross. Had man kept his first estate, there might have been a humble birth in Bethlehem ; there would have been no ignominious death on Calvary. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins." [1]

i.

The existence of sin in the world is an undeniable fact. The perception of its presence is not a peculiarity of the Christian conscience. Everywhere man recognizes the difference between what is right and what is wrong ; and has the sense to see that much of what goes on in the world is not right. Before Christ came, when there was as yet neither a New Testament nor a Christian Church, sin found a place in the disquisitions of philosophers, and cast its gloom over the songs of the classic poets. It is neither the invention nor the discovery of the Christian religion. What Christianity has done, and what no other religion can do, is to reveal its true significance, and to bring the remedy.

Everywhere the individual heart has been heard to groan under its oppressive weight. In the Gentile world, the Latin poet [2] complained in the well-known lines—

> "I see and approve the better things ;
> I follow the worse."

The Jew, under the pressure of an inward spiritual ache, poured out his prayer, "Make

[1] 1 S. Peter iii. 18. [2] Ovid, *Met.* vii. 20.

me a clean heart, O GOD: and renew a right spirit within me."[1] The Christian Apostle S. Paul learnt by personal experience that there was "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind"; and in the presence of that law he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[2]

Our own experience of daily life shows us the prevalence of sin all around us. It thrives alike in the poverty of the slums, in the comfort of the homes of the well-to-do, and in the luxury of the rich man's palace. It lurks under the cheerful countenances and the merry laughter of the young, the strong, and the healthy. Young folk, who seem outwardly gay and thoughtless, are often known to long for spiritual sympathy and guidance, under the weight of something wrong in the life.

ii.

It must be admitted, indeed, that there is at present a tendency to make light of sin. Mr. Gladstone in his later years expressed his fear that the loss of the sense of sin was becoming a serious danger to the age. In Great Britain, as well as in America, congregations resent sermons on eternal punishment. A well-known missioner, of wide experience, has informed us that conviction of sin in the penitent is now less deep than it used to be years ago. It is one of

[1] Ps. li. 10. [2] Rom. vii. 24.

the sayings of Sir Oliver Lodge, "The higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all." [1]

Seldom indeed has philanthropy put forth more energy to alleviate pain and suppress vice. But a philanthropy which is divorced from the religion of JESUS CHRIST, and disregards the root of the evil, can be no effective cure of human woes. A Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children may lessen the sufferings of many helpless ones; but it is only where the love of GOD is spread abroad in the heart that cruelty ceases. Proper housing and beneficial legislation may remove much of the misery and wretchedness of the poor; but it is only participation in the Saviour's spirit of self-sacrifice which can rid the human race of intemperance, selfishness, and undisciplined passions, which are the bane of family life. Prisons may limit the extent of theft, dishonesty, and violence; but it is the power of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST alone which makes men really honest, honourable, and gentle. Suffering is but the dark shadow of sin; crime is the outward symptom of an inward spiritual disease. The cry, the unconscious cry, of human society is for deliverance from moral evil. The stream is poisoned at the source; and the prophet of GOD must needs go to the springs of the waters, bearing in his hand the healing salt of divine grace.[2]

Inadequate realization of the malignity of sin

[1] *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1904), p. 466.

[2] Vide 2 Kings ii. 21.

is a disquieting sign of the times. The Bishop of Birmingham is surely right when he expresses his conviction "That there can be no revival of vital religion among us, on any large scale, or with any adequate results, except through a deepening of the sense of sin." A painless malady is fraught with danger to the patient from the very fact that he feels no need of the physician. As the vampire bat, whilst with its wings it fans the eyes of a man to sleep, at the same moment sucks with its tongue the very blood of his heart; so sin destroys the spiritual life while blinding the eye of the soul to its true character. Under the spell of its bewitching allurements, "fools make a mock at sin." [1] It is only possible to do so in this world. In hell sin is a most serious thing, for there the full weight of its consequences is felt. It is also a most serious thing in heaven; for it is known there how it brought down the Eternal Son of God from the bosom of the Father to Gethsemane, Calvary, and the grave.

A German prince, wishing to inspire his son with a wholesome dread of war, ordered a painter to represent in horrifying colours the different scenes of a bloody battle, and to write underneath, as a title, "The Fruits of War." The four Gospels contain a picture which may well be entitled, "The Fruits of Sin." Nowhere is there such a flood of light poured on the true nature of moral evil as in the teaching, the life, and the death of our Lord. He Who is the God

[1] Proverbs xiv. 9.

of love has drawn aside the curtain to enable us to catch a glimpse of the impenitent, sin-laden soul, "tormented in this flame," and separated from the state of the blessed by "a great gulf fixed."[1] In His mercy and pity, He has warned us against "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched."[2] He teaches us that persistent wickedness and wilful rejection of God, in the face of heavenly light, develop into "eternal sin,"[3] which calls for "eternal punishment."[4] The agony of the garden, and the bitter cry of Calvary, add intensity to the terribleness of the scene.

iii.

Perplexing questions arise here: Why did the good and gracious God allow this terrible evil to enter into the world which He made "very good?" Why were Adam and Eve permitted to take the forbidden fruit, and to bring such disaster upon themselves and their descendants? And why does He not now prevent us from doing things which ruin ourselves and others?

These questions resolve themselves into another, Why did God make man a free agent? It will be agreed on all hands that freedom is one of the greatest of God's blessings to man. In human life liberty is absolutely necessary to excellence. So highly prized a privilege is it considered, that nations have fought for it in

[1] S. Luke xvi. 24, 26.
[2] S. Mark ix. 48.
[3] Ibid. iii. 29, R.V.
[4] S. Matt. xxv. 46.

fierce wars, almost to the point of desperation. To the individual, life without freedom would not be worth living. The Bishop of London tells us that at a meeting of working-men, a striking question was once put down for discussion—"Is it better to be a man than a machine?" There could be no two opinions as to the answer. Compulsory movement, like that of a machine, at the bidding of another, would be preferred by no one to freedom of will and liberty of action. It was better for Adam that his hands were free to take the forbidden fruit, than that he should have been compelled to go about, all the days of his life, with his hands tied behind his back. Thus, GOD endued man with freedom because it is a priceless blessing; and we can give no further account of the origin of sin than that it is the abuse of GOD's precious gift of free-will. GOD made man free in order that he might be at liberty to choose the good. Man abused his privilege and chose the evil.

Other solutions of the problem have been offered. But they fail to satisfy the human heart and conscience. We cannot accept the teaching of Florinus that GOD is the author of evil; nor hold, with the Manichees, the eternal existence of two principles, to one of which the origin of sin must be attributed. Equally impossible is it to acquiesce in those modern theories which seek to ignore the heinousness of sin. Moral evil is not merely a thing to be attributed to our material nature; for there are sinful

works of darkness other than those of the flesh. It is not the outcome of limited knowledge ; for we are not responsible for unavoidable ignorance. It is something worse than failure to attain unto perfection ; more than the absence of good. Sin is not purely negative, it is an active principle. Not merely the shadow cast by the sun, it is the ice which grips the earth.

It cannot be maintained that it is but the remains of the brute nature of the ape, which is not yet fully purged in the process of evolution. The lion, after he has stolen and killed, lies down at ease, and is never oppressed with the sense of having done wrong. If sin were the unpurged remnants of the brute, murder and theft would have brought upon man no agony of conscience. The misery which is the result of sinning proves sin to be an alien and unnatural thing. Should the theory of Evolution be eventually accepted as a fully proved fact, then, in the introduction of sin into the world, we must recognize a serious setback to the progress which the Creator intended for man. So far from being a part of human nature, as made by God, sin is a spiritual disease which has subsequently crept in. Its source is not ultimately in the body, but in the will, which God, of His goodness, made free. In the words of S. Augustine, "Sin is a perversion of the will, bent aside from God."[1] God made man in His own image ; but man with his own hand marred and spoilt the beautiful thing.

[1] *Confessions*, vii. 16.

iv.

We speak of sin as original and actual. What is original sin? It is not that God holds us guilty of a sinful deed committed by another, committed by Adam, and punishes us as if we ourselves were its doers. Our ideas of Divine justice make such a doctrine impossible of belief. The expression "original sin" is not found in Holy Scripture, but the doctrine is there. The Jew, under the old dispensation, bewailed his birth-sin: "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me."[1] Even then it was observed how it made itself felt in the earliest years of childhood. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born."[2] Our Lord made the doctrine a part of His teaching, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."[3] This was re-echoed by S. Paul, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."[4] What is meant is that man is born into the world with a tendency to sin, transmitted from parent to child, all along the line, from Adam to the present day. In the words of Article ix, "It is the fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." Man at his birth has not the favourable start Adam had when he was created. In consequence of this "fault and corruption," he is "of his own nature inclined to evil." Tendency to sin is thus to be distinguished from the commission of sin. But as

[1] Ps. li. 5. [2] Ps. lviii. 3. [3] S. John iii. 6. [4] Gal. v. 17.

this tendency will result in actual sin, unless it is counteracted and healed, "it hath of itself the nature of sin."[1] As such it is displeasing in the sight of God, and needs to be washed away in the precious Blood of Christ. By the practice of Infant Baptism the Church, from the very earliest ages, has shown her belief in the existence of original sin; and in our Baptismal Service we pray to God for the infant who has committed no actual sin that, "Coming to Holy Baptism, he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration."

Daily observation and experience bear testimony to the truth of the Christian doctrine of original sin. It stands, indeed, outside the range of biological speculations on the subject of heredity. Such questions as, How is a physical organism transmitted? Does acquired character descend by inheritance? have little to do with the subject. Spiritual propensities are subject to other laws than those of physical tendencies. In all its aspects, sin is essentially a religious problem for which it is not the business of science to find a solution. Physical facts, however, may serve as illustrations of spiritual truths. The blackness of the negro parents is inherited by their children. The alcoholism of the drunken father has a tendency to perpetuate itself in his offspring. Whatever may be the explanation of such facts, the facts themselves are undeniable; and here science is in her own province when she seeks for an explanation. Such physical facts may be em-

[1] The XXXIX Articles.

ployed as analogies of spiritual truths—but may not be pressed too far. The expression "acquired character," as applied to a spiritual nature, needs to be used with caution. We may not argue from the unchangeable colour of the negro's skin that a bad heart cannot become good. It is not necessary for us to decide whether alcoholism in the child of a drunkard is a real instance of a transmission of acquired character. But the facts themselves help us to realize that a tainted moral nature may be ours from birth; that a nature inclined to evil which first belongs to the race descends to each member of it; that moral character is not wholly due to surroundings, example, and education; that "original sin standeth not in the following of Adam."

The theory of Evolution has in no way weakened our faith in the creation of the world by God, as set forth in the Book of Genesis. Similarly, no biological speculations on the subject of heredity need disturb our belief in the doctrine of original sin taught in Holy Scripture. Evolution may have thrown fresh light on the method of creation; and biological research may bring us new thoughts on the existence of inherited evil tendencies in human nature. In both cases the fundamental facts themselves stand firm and unshaken.

V.

Tendency to sin, when allowed to develop, becomes actual sin. In the words of S. James, "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth

sin."[1] This is one side of the truth. And we must never lose sight of the other. God does "not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."[2] The tendency may be strong; and environment may add to its strength. But in no case does the commission of sin become inevitable. When the matter is looked at in the true light, man always recognizes that it was through his fault, his own fault, his own most grievous fault, that he sinned.

The exceeding sinfulness of sin can only be realized when it is regarded as hostility to God. The penitent psalmist had seen it in its true colour when he exclaimed, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."[3] S. John speaks of sin as "lawlessness."[4] It is a breach of the moral law, which is the law of God's Being, and which is as eternal and as unchangeable as Himself. God cannot alter it, any more than He is able to deny Himself. The revelation of this law is the manifestation of God and His Divine character. Sin, therefore, as lawlessness, is that which puts man in antagonism to the personal God, Who is necessarily holy, just, and good. The impenitent and unforgiven sinner is accordingly a spiritual outlaw. We know how the commission of a crime arrays against the criminal all the forces of law and government. Sin, in like manner, opens the flood-gates for the curse of the law to enter in—forfeiting the benefit and protection of those

[1] S. James i. 15. [2] 1 Cor. x. 13.
[3] Ps. li. 4. [4] 1 S. John iii. 4, R.V.

spiritual forces, which were meant to make human life safe, happy, and blessed.

In the light of Holy Scripture, sin is thus seen to be "exceeding sinful." It is no part of human nature as created by the good and holy GOD, but an alien evil force introduced subsequently by man through the abuse of free-will, which is one of GOD's most precious gifts. In its nature it is that which has missed the mark and led man away from his high and noble destiny: it has made him a transgressor, placing him on dangerous and forbidden ground: it is personal defiance of GOD. As we contemplate its vileness, heinousness, and malignity, we exclaim in the words of Joseph, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD?" [1]

[1] Gen. xxxix. 9.

INSTRUCTION II

God's Attitude towards Sin

Sin is an alien element, as we have seen, which has crept into human life since that day on which God said, "Let Us make man." How does God regard the intruder? There are three ways in which He makes His mind known—Conscience, Providence, and Holy Scripture. In all the three He teaches us that He is against it, hates it, and never makes light of it. The attitude of God towards sin is an attitude of wrath.

A word of caution seems needful here. We must be careful not to ascribe to Divine wrath any of those infirmities which accompany human anger. The wrath of man is often unjust, selfish, excessive, uncalled-for, and vindictive; it is accompanied by excitement and irritation and evil temper. We must exclude all such unworthy impulses from our ideas of the wrath of God. This is not intermittent in its character; not something which rises up at times and then subsides. God's anger is calm, just, reasonable, and unchangeable; it is His uniform opposition to all that is evil; His permanent attitude towards sin.

i.

Conscience is God's vicegerent ; it speaks to man with Divine authority. In fallen human nature, it is true, it speaks in broken accents. Its utterances have become more or less indistinct ; in some cases so indistinct that its meaning has been misunderstood. And yet, as S. Paul testifies, even in the Gentiles, which have not the written law, their conscience bears witness and their thoughts accuse or else excuse.[1] One of these Gentiles[2] had so far understood the meaning of his own "accusing thoughts" that he has left his conviction on record that "if any obeys not the voice of conscience, he shall play false to himself, and shall do despite to the nature of man, and by this very fact shall pay the greatest penalties, even if he should escape all else that is reckoned punishment." History records that King Darius commanded Daniel to be brought and cast into the den of lions. That night "his sleep went from him."[3] Throughout that lonely and sleepless night that mighty monarch felt the weight of Divine indignation against the murder of the innocent.

The sense of shame which follows its commission bears witness to God's hatred of an evil deed. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."[4] This is man in his sinless state. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were

[1] Rom. ii. 15.
[2] Cicero, *de Republica*, i. 3.
[3] Dan. vi. 18.
[4] Gen. ii. 25.

naked ; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD GOD amongst the trees of the garden."[1] Here is sinful, fallen man.

Shame was the first consequence of sin ; it will also be its last. It is the common experience of man when he realizes the nature of the evil deed of which he is guilty. It is the foretaste of a cup of bitterness which is not yet full. S. John cherished the hope "not to be ashamed before Him at His coming."[2] In Daniel's vision of the last day, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."[3]

"Some to shame." Let us try to realize the intensity of this "self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood."[4] Think of a young man, much honoured and respected in his neighbourhood, being found out suddenly to have committed an act of embezzlement. It becomes the painful duty of the police to arrest him. He is marched through the public street into the police-station. Along the route, in windows and doors and at street corners, thousands of cruel eyes seem to be fastening on him. Every passer-by stops to gaze in amazement. Oh ! the shame of the wretched man ! To escape, even though it be to the prison-cell, is a welcome relief. More terrible still is the shame which arises from the conscious-

[1] Gen. iii. 8. [2] 1 S. John ii. 28.
[3] Dan. xii. 2. [4] Shelley, *Prometheus*, Act ii. 4.

ness of standing naked before the piercing eyes of the all-holy GOD.

Man's moral nature does more than testify to the truth of GOD's hatred of sin ; it also approves. The idea of Divine wrath against evil harmonizes with our highest conception of the character of GOD. When we come to examine our thoughts and feelings, we find that our best and noblest instincts, of necessity, ascribe to the GOD Who is good and just a severity against wrong-doing. Indeed, a fellow-man who is found to treat justice and injustice alike, and to make no difference between right and wrong, fails to gain our confidence and respect. It is impossible to conceive of the Moral Governor of the world as an easy-going Being, Who makes light of cruelty and wickedness, and Who looks with equal favour on good and evil. Our natural sense of justice demands, on the one hand, that the good shall be rewarded ; and on the other, that the wicked shall be punished.

ii.

The witness of Conscience is corroborated by the testimony of Providence. GOD makes His mind known not only in our own inward moral nature, but also in the natural course of the external world. As Bishop Butler[1] points out, GOD reveals Himself in the constitution and course of nature, not only as its natural Governor, but also as its moral Governor—One Who makes a

[1] Vide *Analogy*, Part I., chap iii.

distinction between right and wrong—rewarding virtue and punishing vice.

It is not denied that there is much confusion and disorder in the moral world as we know it; but these "do not drown the voice of nature." The voice of Him Who is the Supreme Governor makes itself heard above the water-floods, declaring that He is not indifferent to vice; nay, more, that He is against it.

In Society, he proceeds, "ill actions are never rewarded under the view of their being hurtful to it." Vice, considered as vice, is frequently punished. If a man is known to be a villain and mischievous to the welfare of his fellows, Society generally finds some means of making him feel inconvenience and pain. Thus, "the Author of nature has truly directed that vicious actions, considered as mischievous to Society, should be punished."

Again, the family is a sphere of natural society. We believe it to be a Divine institution founded in Eden. It is clearly intended, in the purpose of God, that men should live together in families. And here it is usual for parents to discountenance and punish untruthfulness, dishonesty, and selfishness.

No less natural is the civil government of the State. Without civil government Society could not be held together. Civil government is therefore natural. "The powers that be are ordained of God."[1] And here again we find opposition to vice and misdeeds. The civil magistrate fines

[1] Rom. xiii. 1.

and imprisons the criminal. In extreme cases he even puts him to death. Thus in Society, in the family, and in the State, GOD reveals His hatred of sin. These punishments, to use the words of Bishop Butler, are not "a deduction of reason"; they are "a matter of experience." "They amount to a declaration from Him."

iii.

More clearly than in Conscience and Providence GOD speaks to man in Holy Scripture. "GOD the HOLY GHOST, the LORD and Giver of Life . . . spake by the prophets."[1] Under the Jewish dispensation, He inspired Habakkuk to declare that the LORD GOD of Israel is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.[2] The Christian Apostle S. Paul, moved by the same HOLY SPIRIT, wrote to the Romans[3] that "the wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." These are words whose meaning is unmistakable. It is the teaching of Holy Scripture that "the wages of sin is death." We speak of three kinds of death—natural, spiritual, eternal. In natural death the soul is separated from the body; in spiritual death, the heart is alienated from GOD; in eternal death, body, soul, and spirit are driven out for ever from the Divine presence.

[1] Nicene Creed. [2] Hab. i. 13. [3] Rom. i. 18.

It is asked, Would Adam have died had he not fallen? Was death introduced into the world by the sin of our first parent? Geologists point to proofs of death having taken place amongst the lower animals before even the advent of man. But the inquiry is not as to the death of a beast of the field, but of a human being. This discovery, therefore, throws no light on the question under consideration. S. Paul, indeed, teaches that "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,"[1]; and also that our LORD "hath abolished death."[2] In what sense, then, has death entered by sin? And to what extent has death been abolished by CHRIST? It is evident that the death which was abolished by our LORD is the death which entered by sin. Bodily death evidently is not meant; for that remains. Our LORD says, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death." As Bishop Westcott[3] observes, death in such passages as this is "not an event, but a state, that selfish isolation which is the negation of life." Had there been no human sin, we may believe that there would have been a transition from one state of existence to another. But death would not have been what it is now: it would have had no sting; it would not have been penal in its character. In a word, all that is terrible in death, whether in its bodily, spiritual, or eternal stage, being the result of sin, is a demonstration of GOD'S attitude towards it.

[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] 2 Tim. i. 10.
[3] Commentary on S. John viii. 51.

iv.

JESUS CHRIST, the Incarnate SON, is the perfect revelation of GOD. "The only begotten SON, Which is in the bosom of the FATHER, He hath declared Him."[1] "He that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER."[2] We see the Divine character itself, then, as we look into the four Gospels. And there is undoubted severity here. Perceiving the hardness of heart which characterized His countrymen, as He was in the synagogue, "He looked round about on them with anger."[3] Standing by the grave of Lazarus, and contemplating there the nature and effects of sin, "He was moved with indignation within Himself."[4] The woes[5] which He denounced against the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees exceed in terror even the thunders of Sinai.

It is important to bear in mind that Divine wrath is in no sense incompatible with Divine love. GOD hates sin, but He loves the sinner. His severity is but one of the aspects of His goodness. This is marvellously exemplified in the life of our LORD. At the very moment when He looked in anger at the unbelief of His fellow-countrymen in the synagogue, His compassion went out to the man with a withered hand, and He healed him.[6] Whilst by the grave of Lazarus He groaned the groan of indignation at the sight of the consequences of sin, His sympathy swelled forth towards the mourners. "JESUS wept."[7]

[1] S. John i. 18. [2] Ibid. xiv. 9. [3] S. Mark iii. 5.
[4] S. John xi. 38, R.V. marg. [5] S. Matt. xxiii. 13–33.
[6] S. Mark iii. 5. [7] S. John xi. 35.

No sooner had the thundering of His woes against hypocrisy ceased, than His tender heart poured itself out in love to the city which was full of Pharisees: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"[1]

It is the depth of the love from which it springs that lends such intensity to anger. What creature so meek, so gentle, and so harmless as the lamb? And yet so awful is the "wrath of the Lamb"[2] that men pray to the rocks and to the mountains to hide them from it. Have we not been surprised and awed by the indignation of a loving gentle Christian, when some wrong thing is said or done in his presence? Have we not been amazed at the fierceness of a mother's wrath at an outrage committed on the son who is the one object of her affection? It is the fierceness of a love which has been wounded. The terribleness of the wrath of God against sin is due to the fact that it is the wrath of infinite love.

From Thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us.

[1] S. Matt. xxiii. 37. [2] Rev. vi. 16.

INSTRUCTION III

The Principle and Origin of Sacrifice

The realization of the true nature of sin, its sad consequences, and the attitude of God towards it, gives rise to the anxious inquiry, Is there salvation? and if there is, Where? The Atonement supplies the answer—"I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven."[1]

But the Virgin-birth did not immediately follow the exclusion from the Garden of Eden. The world needed an interval for preparation. It must receive a lesson from Noah, from Abraham, from Moses. Israel must be set apart as a people that dwelt alone; as the nation from which the Saviour would arise. At last, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."[2]

During the preparatory period sacrifices occupied

[1] Apostles' Creed. [2] Gal. iv. 4.

a prominent position in the religious life of mankind. A study of sacrificial worship may, therefore, be helpful to the understanding of the doctrine of the Atonement. In this Instruction we will deal with the principle and origin of sacrifice; and with the meaning and purpose of the Jewish sacrifices in the next.

i.

In investigating the origin of sacrifices it is necessary to discover the foundation principle on which they rest. Sacrifice, in its essence, may be described as the desire to give. It finds its fullest expression in the giving of self. This idea is recognized in our ordinary language. When we speak of sacrificing time and money, we mean giving time and money voluntarily. Self-sacrifice is self-giving.

Understood in this sense, sacrifice is a trait in the Divine character. It is found in God. The desire to give has, from all eternity, been an active principle of the Divine life. God is the great Giver.

Before the world was, the principle of sacrifice was active in the life of the Godhead. Each Person in the Blessed Trinity has been eternally giving His love to the other two. There is a deep meaning in the words, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."[1] Throughout the distant ages of past eternity His voice was heard —"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."[2] The

[1] Rev. xiii. 8. [2] Heb. x. 7.

principle manifested itself in time, when GOD in the beginning made the heaven and the earth, and gave being to flower, animal, and man. The universe is a standing testimony to GOD's desire to give ; a visible expression of the principle of sacrifice in the Divine life. But the crowning manifestation, the fullest expression known to us, was witnessed on Calvary, when the FATHER "gave His only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"[1] ; and the SON gave "His life a ransom for many."[2]

This, then, is our starting-point : the principle of sacrifice is the desire to give, and it is found in GOD Himself.

ii.

Our next inquiry is, How came sacrifice to find a place in human life ? The answer is supplied by the inspired account of the creation of man, "And GOD said, Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness."[3] "And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."[4] Thus, in his creation, GOD breathed His own life into man ; and stamped His own character on his soul. Human life, as created by GOD, reflected the light of the Divine life. What existed in GOD, perfectly and infinitely, was found also in man in an incomplete and finite measure. As the principle of sacrifice, the desire to give, formed a trait of the Divine

[1] S. John iii. 16.
[2] S. Matt. xx. 28.
[3] Gen. i. 26.
[4] Gen. ii. 7.

character, it was breathed by the HOLY SPIRIT into the soul of Adam at his creation in Eden.

It is therefore natural to believe that in his state of innocence, before the triumph of the subtle serpent, man gave expression to this principle in some form or other. In Eden there were two trees—the tree of knowledge, and the tree of life. The one symbolized obedience to the law; the other, fellowship and union with GOD. We see in both an expression of the principle of sacrifice. For in obedience to the law of GOD, and in fellowship with Him, man gives the homage of his heart to GOD, and offers himself on the altar to fulfil the Divine will.

The Divine image has not been wholly obliterated from the human heart as a result of the Fall. It is true that man is "very far gone from original righteousness."[1] The old man is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."[2] But man has not lost altogether the Divine likeness in which he was made. The thieves have sorely wounded him, but there is some life still. They have left him "half dead."[3] The principle of sacrifice remains; the desire to give has not been crushed out. We must regard the covetous man, who is an idolater, the thoroughly selfish man, who does not give anything, as nothing better than a human monster.

Sacrifice is, thus, an original principle of human nature. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that it should be found universal in its operation. The history of the human race confirms the

[1] Article ix. [2] Eph. iv. 22. [3] S. Luke x. 30.

expectation. Everywhere man desires to give to God; everywhere altars are reared; everywhere sacrifices are offered. The intensity of the principle is shown by the costliness of the offerings. Archbishop Magee has shown that human sacrifices have been a part of every religious system except the Jewish.[1] Often has the heathen cry been heard, "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"[2] In the dark places of the earth, the gods to which sacrifices are offered are capricious tyrants, whom it is well to humour with gifts; revengeful and vindictive beings, whose freakish anger must somehow be appeased; powerful monarchs of the sky who have to be persuaded to withhold their curses, and coaxed to bestow their blessings. As S. Paul says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."[3]

The explanation of this strange phenomenon is not far to seek. It is a right principle wrongly applied. Man possessing still within him the original desire to give, but fallen into ignorance of the true God, offers sacrifices from wrong motives, and to false objects of worship.

iii.

As the entrance of sin into the world changed the relationship between God and man, the principle of sacrifice assumed a new form of

[1] *Atonement and Sacrifice.* Illust. No. 5.
[2] Micah vi. 7. [3] 1 Cor. x. 20.

expression. The element of suffering came in. Where sin is not, sacrifice is a joy and delight. Such was its character in Eden before the Fall; such it is ever in heaven. The holy angels cast their costliest crowns at the feet of Him Who sits upon the throne, and feel no shadow of pain. But sin has brought suffering into sacrifices. In those offered after the Fall blood-shedding became an essential element. The removal of the barrier between GOD and the soul required the blood of the victim. Henceforth "without shedding of blood is no remission."[1]

iv.

The origin of bloody sacrifices was at one time the subject of considerable controversy.[2] Were they of human, or of Divine institution? Was the practice started by man in obedience to his own instinct? Or was it due to a special command received from heaven? The consideration of "the divers manners" in which GOD "spake to the fathers" in those early days would take us too far away from our subject. We cannot be certain, but it seems highly improbable, that man would have conceived the idea of offering blood as atonement—as improbable as that he would have chosen bread and wine to be the memorial of the death of CHRIST—except under some special Divine direction. In the law of

[1] Heb. ix. 22.

[2] Vide Davison's *Inquiry into the Origin and Intent of Primitive Sacrifices.*

Moses full instructions are provided, and it is inconceivable that, in a matter of such paramount importance, man could have been left to blunder along as well as he might, till GOD came down on Sinai. GOD was pleased to accept the sacrifices of slain animals offered by Abel and Noah. They had been offered in obedience to His command.

V.

The early chapters of Genesis relate how GOD corrected two mistaken ideas as to the form of sacrifices—the first in the case of Cain and Abel, the second in the case of Abraham.

"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD." As he was a tiller of the ground, it seemed a natural thing for him to bring some of its fruit as his offering. "But unto Cain and to his offering GOD had not respect." "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering."[1] And as Abel was a keeper of sheep, his offering also seemed as natural as that of his brother.

Why was one accepted and the other rejected? The Epistle to the Hebrews throws some light on the question. "By faith Abel offered unto GOD a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."[2] The faith of Abel enabled him to offer not only a purer heart, but also "a sacrifice" that was "more excellent." The firstlings of the flock

[1] Gen. iv. 4. [2] Heb. xi. 4.

were "more excellent" than the fruit of the earth. The offering of Cain was unacceptable because in it no blood was shed; whereas in his brother's sacrifice there was blood-shedding. Thus in the earliest years of man's life GOD was pleased to correct Cain's mistaken idea.

By the time of Abraham another error had become prevalent. GOD required the blood of an animal; but were human beings also to be offered in sacrifice? In this matter mankind had altogether gone astray; and human sacrifices had become general. GOD chose His own way of setting man right. He said unto Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."[1] The narrative is not free from difficulties. But we may believe that to Abraham there was nothing very strange or unnatural in the command. He had been a frequent witness of human immolations. From a moral point of view, it is possible the act presented no difficulty to the partially informed conscience of the patriarch. But the great lesson of the act is contained in the closing scene. "And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven. . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him. . . . And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."[2] This strange and mysterious occurrence had, doubtless, great and

[1] Gen. xxii. 2. [2] Ibid. 11–13.

important purposes to serve in the Divine mind. It certainly spoke of the Cross and Resurrection of CHRIST. And it seems clear also that, for one thing, it was intended to teach the unlawfulness of human sacrifices. It impressed the truth indelibly on the mind of the patriarch. As he descended the mountain, with Isaac at his side, the lesson sank deep into his heart. It was important that it should. Abraham was the head of the chosen race. Religious truths and practices were to descend from him to posterity. And it is a fact worthy of notice that, whilst human sacrifices prevailed amongst the nations around, they were never allowed as a part of the Jewish sacrificial system.

In the rejection of Cain's sacrifice, man was taught that blood-shedding is essential in a sacrifice for sin ; in the substitution of the ram for Isaac, the unlawfulness of human sacrifices was placed beyond doubt.

To sum up, the principle of sacrifice is the desire to give, and it is an attribute of the Divine nature. It was stamped on man's heart at his creation, which explains the prevalence of sacrificial worship amongst all the nations of the earth. The entrance of sin into the world necessitated a change in the form of sacrifices ; suffering came in. Animal sacrifices were a Divine institution based on the law that "without shedding of blood is no remission."

INSTRUCTION IV

The Meaning and Purpose of the Jewish Sacrifices

Two books of the Bible deal specially with the Jewish sacrificial system—Leviticus in the Old Testament, and the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New.

It may be well, in our study of the subject, to take as our starting-point the following words from the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices."[1] The passage speaks of two kinds of offerings—first, gifts; secondly, sacrifices. The words occur three times in the Epistle[2]; and the two ideas for which they stand underlie the principal argument of the inspired writer. In each case the offering of them unto God pertains to the office of the priest. It is the priest who offers the gifts; it is he also who offers the sacrifices. The offering of the gifts is, therefore, a priestly or sacrificial act, as well as the offering of the sacrifices. The two words embrace all the offerings presented to God by the Jewish priest; and they mark the two great classes into which they were divided.

[1] Heb. viii. 3. [2] Vide also Heb. v. 1, and ix. 9.

It will thus be necessary to inquire what is meant by sacrifices, what by gifts; and how the latter differ from the former.

i.

For light on these questions we look to Leviticus. At first sight, this book comes before us as a veritable labyrinth of regulations, through which it seems wellnigh impossible for any one to thread his way. A closer inspection, however, discloses an orderly plan in the whole sacrificial system described, and a meaning in every minute detail.

Five kinds of sacrifices are prescribed in Leviticus—first, the sin-offering; secondly, the trespass-offering; thirdly, the burnt-offering; fourthly, the meat-offering; fifthly, the peace-offering. But these five divisions may be reduced to two. The sin-offering and the trespass-offering were akin in their nature, and formed one division. They were what the Epistle to the Hebrews describes as "sacrifices," or "sacrifices for sin." The remaining three—the burnt-offering, the meat-offering, and the peace-offering—formed the second division, being "the gifts" of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The sin-offering and trespass-offering were offered as a propitiation, atonement, and satisfaction, for wrong done. The meat-offering, the burnt-offering, and the peace-offering, indicated a state of reconciliation with God, communion and fellowship with Him, a soul at peace with its Maker.

It is worthy of notice that sacrifices for sin, which stand for atonement, always accompany the gifts which symbolize pardon and peace. Never were the meat-offering, the burnt-offering, and the peace-offering presented apart from a sacrifice for sin consumed on the altar. The gift was not accepted till the atonement had been made. For fallen man communion with GOD is impossible till sin has been atoned for and pardoned. Such were the two great divisions of the Jewish sacrificial worship; and such was the relation of the one to the other.

ii.

The details of the ceremonial law of the Jews are full of spiritual instruction. Let us first take the ceremonial of the sin-offering and trespass-offering.[1] There was some difference, no doubt, between the two. The former may have been for sins of omission, and the latter for sins of commission. Or, the one may have been for acts of sin, and the other for a state of guilt. But the two form one class—"As the sin-offering is, so is the trespass-offering."[2] And as the particulars of the sin-offering are more fully described, they may be taken as referring to the one as well as to the other.

The ceremonial begins with the imposition of the hand of the offerer upon the head of the victim. "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering."[3] By this act the offerer, in

[1] Lev. iv, v, vi, and vii. [2] Ibid. vii. 7. [3] Ibid. iv. 29.

figure, identifies himself with the victim ; so that what is done in the animal is done in himself.

The next step follows : the victim is killed before the LORD [1] ; its blood is poured out at the bottom of the altar [2] ; the fat and the best parts of the sacrifice are burnt on the altar of the burnt offering [3] ; and the rest of the body is carried without the camp, and there burnt on the wood with fire. [4]

The great truth signified here is that the offerer is worthy of death, that his life is forfeited and poured out, and that he deserves to be cast out of the presence of GOD. In this, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us, "there is a remembrance again made of sins" [5] ; a confession of guilt ; and an acknowledgement of the justice of the Divine verdict—"The wages of sin is death." [6]

As will be seen later, the burnt-offering signified acceptance by GOD. At first sight, therefore, it seems strange that a part of the sin-offering should be placed for consumption on the altar of burnt-offering. But it was the element of hope. It taught the sinful penitent offerer that GOD accepted his confession. In wrath He remembers mercy. [7]

But there is more to follow in the sin-offering : "And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary." [8] "And

[1] Lev. iv. 4. [2] Ibid. iv. 7. [3] Ibid. iv. 10.
[4] Ibid. iv. 12. [5] Heb. x. 3. [6] Rom. vi. 23.
[7] Hab. iii. 2. [8] Lev. iv. 6.

the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD."[1] This act of sprinkling the blood before the LORD was the essential part of the sin-offering; and GOD has explained to us its significance. What is meant by the blood? As early as the time of Noah man was taught that the blood was the life.[2] And again, in the time of Moses, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."[3] Two things are thus said of the blood—first, that it is the life; secondly, that it maketh atonement. It is not death, therefore, but life which is signified by the blood: life which has passed through death; life surrendered to GOD. It is the most precious thing a man possesses. But the life of the sinner is not his own; he has forfeited it through sin. GOD, therefore, as the Author of life, in a figure "gives" it back to man, in order that he may offer it on the altar—thus surrendering it to GOD. The essence of atonement is here revealed. It is the outcome of intense love, surrendering the most precious possession—even life itself.

One more detail remains to be noticed. The blood was not offered on the altar, but "sprinkled before the LORD." Thus the surrendered life was placed permanently in the Divine Presence—sprinkled before the LORD, the blood remained there. This teaches us the permanence of the Atonement. It is an abiding act; always present

[1] Lev. iv. 7. [2] Gen. ix. 4. [3] Lev. xvii. 11.

to the mind of God; and it is the sprinkled blood that "makes reconciliation."[1]

Thus the purpose of the sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews as "sacrifices," was to make atonement for sin and reconciliation between God and man.

iii.

The offering of the "gifts" pertained to the reconciled state based upon the atonement made through "sacrifices." The gifts, as we have seen, were of three kinds.

The first is the burnt-offering, so called because it was wholly burnt by fire.[2] Other sacrifices were consumed in part; of this alone every portion was burnt to ashes. It signified entire dedication to God. The placing of it all in the fire spoke of the surrender to God of the whole man—body, soul, and spirit. Its entire consumption symbolized its acceptance by God. The offerer gave his heart, and, through the atonement already made, God is pleased to accept it.

Then, the meat-offering. It consisted of such things as fine flour, oil, and frankincense,[3] which are the fruit of the earth; and are the outcome of the co-operation of man with God in the realm of nature. It showed that man is the fellow-labourer with God in the work of salvation. Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase. On the one hand, it taught that man must

[1] Lev. viii. 15. [2] Ibid. i. 9. [3] Ibid. ii. 1.

"work out his own salvation with fear and trembling": on the other, that it is "GOD which worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."[1]

Two things were specifically excluded from the meat-offering. There was to be no leaven, and no honey.[2] Leaven is symbolic of unhealthy excitement and swelling pride, and honey of the sweetness of self-satisfaction. In our co-operation with Divine grace no room must be allowed for pride and undue excitement, and none for self-complaisance and self-righteousness.

The third was the peace-offering, its chief characteristic being that it was a feast upon the sacrifice. The victim was divided into three parts—one was wholly consumed by the fire of the altar, signifying its Divine acceptance, and it was regarded as the food of the LORD[3]; the second portion was eaten by the priest, the mediator of the old covenant[4]; whilst the third part went to make a feast for the offerer and his household,[5] and it was eaten, not as a common meal, but in the holy place, and before the LORD.[6] It is the final element in sacrifice. GOD and man, through the appointed mediator, have fellowship and communion with one another. The penitent soul and the holy GOD are reconciled—there is peace between heaven and earth.

Reviewing the whole Jewish sacrificial system, it is seen to consist of two divisions—first, the sacrifices for sin; secondly, the gifts or offerings

[1] Phil. ii. 12, 13. [2] Lev. ii. 11. [3] Ibid. iii. 16.
[4] Ibid. vii. 34. [5] Ibid. 15. [6] Deut. xii. 17, 18.

of "sweet savour."[1] The first sets forth the alienation which sin has brought about between GOD and man, and the reconciliation through the sprinkled blood. The second symbolizes man's entire consecration to GOD; co-operation in the sphere of Divine grace; and spiritual communion with the FATHER in heaven.

iv.

The Jewish sacrifices, like those of the Patriarchal age, had a Divine purpose to fulfil, which looked beyond the present into the future. They were in themselves but shadows, types, and figures. There was in them, indeed, a striking remembrance of sin. They spoke unmistakably of guilt, of the forfeiture of life, of spiritual ruin, of separation from GOD. But they brought no true deliverance. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."[2] Regarded in themselves, the Old Testament sacrifices could not but cast a gloom of despair over human life. What, then, was their true value? They pointed to a sacrifice better, nobler, more perfect than themselves. They showed the death of the Incarnate SON, which was to take place in the future. It was faith in the coming Redeemer which enabled the Jew to derive hope from his sacrificial worship. The darkness of the shadow was, to the believing Jew, illumined by the light of the substance. The blood sprinkled before the LORD in the holy place

[1] Lev. i. 13, ii. 2, iii. 5. [2] Heb. x. 4.

foreshadowed "the Blood of JESUS CHRIST His SON which cleanseth us from all sin."[1]

Alike under the old dispensation and the new, the Atonement made by CHRIST on the Cross is the only foundation of man's hope. Take CHRIST out of the sacrifice of the Jew, and it becomes awful to contemplate—terrifying, killing. In the same way, without CHRIST, the SON of GOD, and the Atonement made by Him, the Gospel becomes a dead religious system ; nay, something worse—you have a vivid consciousness of sin, without a remedy for sin. Hell, with all its horrors, opens out before you, and you look in vain for a way of escape. Heaven appears in the remote distance —glorious, beautiful, and blessed ; but it is quite out of your reach. This is the Gospel without CHRIST. Bring Him in, His Divine Personality and His atoning death, and all is changed. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[2] The Son of Man has been lifted up, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."[3] Through Jewish sacrifices and Christian Sacraments, through Bible and through Church, the penitent and believing soul must gaze upon Him "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."[4] Out of CHRIST, we die : in CHRIST, we live.

[1] 1 S. John i. 7.
[2] Rom. viii. 1.
[3] S. John iii. 15.
[4] Rom. iv. 25.

INSTRUCTION V

The Death of Christ

The Old Testament sacrifices, with which we dealt in two previous Instructions, found their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. When in the fullness of the time He appeared, He announced the purpose of His Divine mission, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[1] He is the Substance of which the law of Moses was the shadow. Being Himself both Priest and Sacrifice, He became the Mediator of a better covenant. "The blood of bulls and of goats" could but "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," but "the Blood of Christ . . . purges the conscience from dead works."[2] The blessings typified and promised in the sacrifices of the Jewish dispensation became real, actual possessions through the sacrifice of the death of Christ.

i.

In entering upon this great subject, it may be well to remind ourselves that the death on Calvary was a real historical event. We live in days in which fiction has more readers than history. A

[1] S. Matt. v. 17. [2] Heb. ix. 13, 14.

good novel may, indeed, bring refreshment, elevation, and even inspiration into the life of the reader. On the other hand, if over done, the reading of fiction may leave the mind in a state of dreamy unreality, out of touch with the actual conditions of everyday life. The places, occurrences, sayings, and heroes of the story are the creation of human imagination. They have no objective existence, being the mere product of the brain of the writer.

But the last chapters of the four Gospels are no fiction, no invention of human fancy, no flight of poetic imagination. What the evangelists relate are actual objective facts. Jerusalem, Gethsemane, Calvary, are places of whose existence no one can doubt. Nobody has ever seriously tried to deny that JESUS CHRIST lived and died on earth. The Apostles' Creed recites the exact date and manner of His death, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." With this agrees the testimony of the Roman historian, who records that CHRIST, the Founder of the Christian religion, was condemned to death when Tiberius was emperor, and Pontius Pilate procurator.[1] The agony and bloody sweat of the garden, and the suffering and death of the Cross, are historical occurrences, the truth of which rests on incontrovertible testimony.

ii.

CHRIST came into the world in order to die. His death formed a part of the plan He designed

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* xv. 44.

to carry out. He spoke of it, throughout His public ministry, both to the Jews and to His own disciples. It is impossible to read the four Gospels without perceiving that, at all times, it filled His mind. At the very beginning of His ministry, on the occasion of His turning the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, at His first Passover, He said unto the Jews, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "He spake of the temple of His Body,"[1] on which, He knew, they would lay violent hands. Again, at His second Passover, when the Scribes and Pharisees sought of Him a sign from heaven, He answered them, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."[2] It is an undoubted reference to His death, burial, and resurrection. The words were so understood by the Jews who heard them. After His death and burial, the chief priests approached Pontius Pilate with a request that "the sepulchre might be made sure until the third day"; giving this as their reason, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again."[3]

To His disciples our LORD spoke of His death in plainer language, but not at first. To them it was an unwelcome truth, and they needed a time of preparation for its acceptance. He knew that it would not be safe or wise to tell them of His death and Passion until they had first realized Who and what He Himself was. Accordingly,

[1] S. John ii. 19, 21. [2] S. Matt. xii. 40. [3] Ibid. xxvii. 63.

by miracles and mighty works, by a teaching to which no man had ever heard the like, by a pure and sinless character, and by a life of infinite love and mercy, He led them to the knowledge of His Divine Personality. At last the time was ripe for the plain announcement. Leading them apart from the multitude, into the solitude of the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked them the all-important question, "Whom say ye that I am?" S. Peter, speaking for the twelve, answered and said, "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD." This confession of faith in His Divine Sonship marked a new departure in our LORD'S teaching. Hitherto He had not spoken to them very plainly of His death. But "from that time forth began JESUS to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."[1]

It is not necessary to do more here than to remind ourselves of a few of the references our LORD made, after this, to His death, in the hearing of the twelve. On one occasion He compares Himself to a grain of wheat: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."[2] On another occasion He is the Good Shepherd, and "the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."[3] When on the way to Jerusalem to meet the end, "JESUS went before them" with such awe-inspiring courage and

[1] S. Matt. xvi. 21. [2] S. John xii. 24. [3] Ibid. x. 11.

majestic determination, that the disciples "were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid."[1]

It is thus evident that His condemnation and crucifixion did not overtake our LORD unexpectedly, as by surprise. He had always looked forward to His Passion as an essential part of the scheme which He had undertaken to carry into effect. It formed a prominent part of His teaching during His public ministry. His original plan included His death upon the Cross.

iii.

There is more in our LORD's own teaching about His death. He not only foretold it, but also explained its object. Under various figures He unfolded the great truth that by His death He would "save His people from their sins."[2] Even His forerunner pointed to Him as "the Lamb of GOD, Which taketh away the sin of the world."[3] In His interview with Nicodemus, He compared the healing power of His death to that of the brazen serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."[4] In the synagogue at Capernaum He taught His hearers that He was about to give His flesh "for the life of the world."[5] In giving the Cup to His disciples at the Last Supper, He used the

[1] S. Mark x. 32. [2] S. Matt. i. 21. [3] S. John i. 29.
[4] Ibid. iii. 14, 15. [5] Ibid. vi. 51.

memorable words, "This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."[1] To mention one more reference: when the two sons of Zebedee requested for themselves places of honour in His kingdom, they were referred to the path which our LORD had chosen for Himself, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[2]

According to His own view of it, made known beforehand, our LORD's death was not an ordinary event; not merely the fate which awaits many a good and righteous man in a wicked world. It was much more than martyrdom. A martyr's death, indeed, bears witness to the truth: but the death of CHRIST was a sacrifice for sin, and obtained for the penitent pardon and peace. Before He had as yet surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies, He declared the atoning power of His death. In His own words, already quoted, His life was laid down as a "ransom"; that is to say, the means through which we are delivered from the captivity of sin.

iv.

After His ascension into glory, the disciples of our LORD, guided by the HOLY GHOST, Who came down from heaven, were able to enter more fully into the meaning of the mysterious teaching, which, during His life, they had but dimly understood.

[1] S. Matt. xxvi. 28. [2] Ibid. xx. 28.

S. John was the disciple whom JESUS loved, and who leaned on His breast at supper. The quiet, devotional, affectionate nature of the disciple of love fitted Him, in an eminent degree, to interpret the teaching of Him Who is Himself Love. His words are significant, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[1]

The foremost Apostle among the twelve was S. Peter. He, more than the rest, had felt the weight of guilt and the need of pardon. The teaching of our LORD about His own death had gone home to his heart and conscience, and he sums it up in a few striking words—"CHRIST also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to GOD."[2]

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has concealed his name. Whoever he may have been, his belief in the atoning character of CHRIST's death is identical with that held by the apostolic body. One sentence of his puts the matter beyond dispute, "CHRIST was once offered to bear the sins of many."[3]

When the well-educated, deeply-learned, and highly-intellectual Saul of Tarsus came to study the teaching of CHRIST, he saw in it distinctly the great doctrine of the Atonement. The idea underlies all his Epistles. He writes to the Christians of Rome that "CHRIST died for us," and that "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD by the death of His SON, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved

[1] 1 S. John ii. 2. [2] 1 S. Peter iii. 18. [3] Heb. ix. 28.

by His life."[1] Not less explicit are His words to the Colossians, in which He says that it pleased the FATHER, "having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself."[2]

We rise from the study of the four Gospels with the clear and firm conviction, that our LORD really died outside the walls of Jerusalem, when Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judæa; that His death did not come upon Him as a surprise, but was an essential part of His original plan; that He taught His followers, during His public ministry, that His Blood shed on Calvary would be for the remission of sins. In the Epistles of the New Testament, the teaching of the four Gospels is emphasized, expanded, expounded, and applied. And, as a result, we cannot but fall on our knees before our LORD, with the ancient prayer of the Litany on our lips:

"By Thine Agony and bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial: by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the coming of the HOLY GHOST, Good LORD, deliver us."

[1] Rom. v. 8–10. [2] Col. i. 19, 20.

INSTRUCTION VI

The Central Truth of the Atonement

In the teaching of our Blessed Lord and His Apostles, as we have seen, man's deliverance from sin and reconciliation with God have been effected through the death on the Cross. We have here the central truth of the Atonement—a fact upon which it is of the utmost importance that we should lay firm hold. It is expressed in its simplest form in S. Paul's familiar words, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[1] Around this central truth theories have been elaborated; explanations of difficulties have been offered; errors have grown up. But apart from all these, there stands the central fact, "Christ died for us." Theories may be wrong, explanations may lead only to problems which are still harder to solve. But the central fact is, and ever remains, a firm rock upon which the anxious soul may plant its foot and be safe.

Let us try to look at the fact of the Atonement in the light of the teaching of the whole Bible, and apart from speculations which have gathered round it.

[1] Rom. v. 8.

i.

The question has been asked, For whom did the Saviour lay down His life? There have been some who, through misunderstanding the doctrine of election, have held that He only died for a few elect people. This is an error which has done great harm. A traveller in a railway carriage affords a sad instance. Addressing a fellow-traveller, he said, "I presume you believe in GOD. I do not. In my youth I was taught that He had from all eternity decreed that a few favoured souls, for whom CHRIST suffered, would be received into heaven; and that the rest of mankind must eternally perish. I found it impossible to believe in a Being so unjust, so unfeeling, so tyrannical, and so partial in His favours." He said he was very miserable, adding, "It is better to believe in the GOD of Calvin, than in no GOD at all." This unfortunate man had evidently, in his youth, been shown a caricature of Christianity, which he mistook for Christianity itself, with the result that he lost his faith.

The true doctrine of election, as taught in Holy Scripture and held by the Church, in no way contradicts the central truth of the Atonement. This is not the place to deal with it at length. Suffice it to say that its essential principle lies in GOD's choice of a few through whom to bless the many. Abraham was chosen as an elect person, in order that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed.[1] Israel was an

[1] Gen. xii. 3.

elect nation; and through it the light of truth shone on the nations around, and out of it arose CHRIST, the Saviour of the world. The Christian Church is now the elect people of GOD, and it is the Divine purpose that through her the Gospel shall be preached to every creature.[1] This is in perfect harmony with the doctrine of the Atonement that "GOD so loved the world,"[2] not a part of it only, and that CHRIST is the propitiation for the "sins of the whole world."[3] That CHRIST died for all is the doctrine of the Church. She has never taught another. She ever impresses upon the mind of her children that GOD the SON redeemed them "and all mankind."[4] And those who are admitted to Holy Communion are led to see in the death on the Cross "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."[5]

ii.

It is necessary to guard against language which might convey the idea that the FATHER and the SON entered into a kind of covenant, in the remote ages of past eternity; that while the FATHER was wroth with sinful man and bent upon his punishment, the SON intervened in mercy and offered to suffer in his stead; that Calvary was a manifestation of the FATHER'S

[1] S. Mark xvi. 15. [2] S. John iii. 16.
[3] 1 Ibid. ii. 2. [4] Church Catechism.
[5] Prayer of Consecration.

wrath against the SON, and of the SON's love to fallen man.

This is not the teaching of the Bible, emphatically it is not. It is not the creed of the Church.

The Christian Church, taking her stand on Holy Scripture, has always jealously guarded the truth of the oneness of GOD; oneness of love and power; oneness of purpose, will, and action. The Atonement is the work of all the Three Persons in the Godhead, co-operating in blessed harmony. It is the revelation of the infinite love of the Three Persons in one GOD. The FATHER in love gives His only-begotten SON[1]; the SON in love gives Himself[2]; the HOLY SPIRIT in love co-operates at every stage.[3] The SON was "the beloved" not only at His Baptism and Transfiguration, but also in Gethsemane and on the Cross.

The bitter cry of Calvary, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"[4] is no contradiction of this truth. The words are mysterious and beyond the power of the human mind to explain. But the proportion of faith requires the belief that the inner sufferings of soul which our LORD endured were purely voluntary. There was no wrathful hiding of face on the part of the FATHER; but the SON, of His own good pleasure, in the sacrifice of Himself, willed to withdraw Himself from the

[1] 1 S. John iii. 16. [2] Eph. v. 2, 25.
[3] S. Matt. iii. 16. S. John i. 32. Heb. ix. 14.
[4] S. Matt. xxvii. 46.

sunshine of the Divine countenance. The sufferings of the Atonement were as voluntary as the humiliation of the Incarnation. As the SON emptied Himself in being made man,[1] so there was a further self-emptying when He made His soul an offering for sin.[2]

iii.

Errors have arisen from the tendency to press unduly the meaning of the metaphors under which Holy Scripture speaks of the atoning work of CHRIST. One of these metaphors is "ransom." It is used by our LORD Himself. "The SON of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[3] The language, at first sight, suggests to us the idea of a captive detained in prison by a brigand, who demands a sum of money as the price of his release. Even in early Christian times the question was raised, "To whom was the ransom paid?—to Satan? or to some one else?" This was to forget the inadequacy of human language to express the secret things of GOD. One figure of speech can but set forth one aspect of Divine truth; recourse must be had to another figure to express another aspect. It is only by endeavouring to hold before our eyes the various sides of the one truth, as suggested by different expressions and metaphors, that we may hope to keep the proportion of faith, and to avoid error.

[1] Phil. ii. 6–8. [2] Isa. liii. 10. [3] S. Matt. xx. 28.

What is the aspect of the Atonement brought out by this metaphorical language? The best answer is found in the study of the Old Testament Scriptures.[1] Much of the language of the New Testament is figurative, and is based on Old Testament metaphors. Close attention to the style of the Old Testament, and intimate familiarity with its metaphorical allusions are, in many instances, absolutely essential to the right understanding of the language used by CHRIST and His Apostles. We have seen that our LORD speaks of His death as a "ransom." S. Peter reminds the "strangers" to whom he writes that they "were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of CHRIST."[2] S. Paul, addressing the Ephesian elders, refers to "the Church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood."[3] These references to ransoming, redeeming, purchasing for a price, take us back to the Old Testament, where similar language is frequent. Those who were thoroughly familiar with it could not but perceive that, in these passages, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt was made the type of the salvation wrought by CHRIST. That deliverance is described as a purchase or redemption. "O think upon Thy congregation: whom Thou hast purchased and redeemed of old."[4] Again, "Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money."[5] It is not here

[1] Vide Bishop Gibson's *The Old Testament in the New.*
[2] 1 S. Peter i. 18, 19.
[3] Acts xx. 28.
[4] Ps. lxxiv. 2.
[5] Isa. lii. 3.

suggested that, in the deliverance of Israel from their bondage, there was any bargain under which their oppressor was to receive a sum of money as the price of their freedom. The underlying idea is not that of covenant, but of victory over an enemy. In this light it will be seen in what sense the death of our LORD is a ransom. It is not implied that the enemy of our souls received a price. The truth taught is that he was vanquished, and that the spiritual captive was set free. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."[1]

iv.

A word of caution seems necessary against a tendency to exaggerate the vicarious character of our LORD's atoning death. We nowhere read in Holy Scripture that CHRIST died "instead of us": but the expression "for us" is frequent. Our LORD Himself, to quote His words again, speaks of His life as given a ransom "for many." S. Paul teaches that He was made a curse "for us"; and S. Peter that He suffered—the just, for the unjust. It has been urged that the Greek preposition in these passages signifies "instead." But, as in the Authorized Version, so in the Revised, the more correct rendering, "for us," remains; and care must be taken not to read into the expression a meaning which it does not contain. There is a sense in which

[1] Col. ii. 15.

CHRIST suffered as our substitute, for He died that we might live; but the correctness of that sense must be guarded by the thought that He suffered as our Representative. He did not act for us in the sense that there is nothing left for us to do. He submitted Himself to the Divine will as the first-fruits of the human race; involving, therefore, the submission of mankind.

v.

Two questions have been raised respecting the justice of the Atonement. In the first place, Is it right that the guilty sinner should not be made to bear the full penalty of his evil deeds? This is to doubt the propriety of forgiveness in any form or under any circumstances. Such a doubt can never be seriously entertained by the human conscience. The act of a parent who persists in closing the door in the face of his penitent child rouses in the human heart an indignant protest against a great wrong. No one has ever read of the welcome extended by his father to the returning prodigal with any other feeling than that of admiration, satisfaction, and approval. To condemn the Christian doctrine of forgiveness to the penitent for CHRIST'S sake is to condemn the goodness and loving-kindness which pardon implies.

In the second place, Is it just that the innocent Person should bear the consequences of sins which He never committed? It is certainly never right to punish the wrong person. The human con-

science would revolt against any such act. It is contrary to our sense of right and wrong. But no such idea forms a part of the Christian doctrine of Atonement. In this connection, prominence should be given to the truth that our LORD's sufferings were purely voluntary. No punishment from without was inflicted on Him. That an unwilling victim should be compelled to suffer for the faults of another would be unjust; but that one person should, of his own accord, sacrifice what is lawfully his own for the benefit of another involves no injustice. The Scripture doctrine of the Atonement is that the Incarnate SON, out of love to man and of His own free will, sacrificed Himself. Being the LORD of life, His own life was His absolute possession. He Himself said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."[1] In laying down His life "for the sheep,"[2] the life which was absolutely His own, He gave expression to that principle of sacrifice which is an attribute of the Divine character.[3] It is a principle to which the human conscience gives its unhesitating approval. A real act of self-sacrifice never suggests the idea of injustice; but, on the contrary, calls forth the genuine admiration of the human heart. Loving self-sacrifice is the most beautiful thing in the world.

The central truth of the Atonement, "CHRIST died for us," is a fact which a living faith eagerly grasps. Its deep inner meaning is, indeed, beyond the power of the human intellect to

[1] S. John x. 18. [2] Ibid. 15. [3] Vide Instruction iii.

fathom. But it is a truth in which reason acquiesces, for it sees in it nothing which is contradictory to itself. As it is an exhibition of the highest principle of self-sacrifice, the human conscience accepts it as right and just. Our whole nature finds rest in the thought that "CHRIST loved the Church and gave Himself for it." The yearning of the human heart for justice and for love finds satisfaction in the Cross.

INSTRUCTION VII

Propitiation and Reconciliation in the Incarnate Son

Two aspects of the Atonement are set forth by two expressions which are employed in the New Testament. The Greek word ἱλασμός, translated "propitiation," is peculiar to S. John, and occurs twice in his first Epistle.[1] S. Paul uses the word καταλλαγή, which is rendered "reconciliation," and is found, in various forms, five times in the New Testament in reference to God.[2] With the ideas conveyed by these two words are connected all the truths concerning the atoning work of the Saviour.

Regarded as a propitiation, the death and passion of our Lord made it possible for God to turn away His wrath, and to receive mankind into His favour. Purged of all ideas of passions, vindictiveness, and caprice, which heathen ignorance had imported into the expression, the Christian doctrine of propitiation sets forth that the unchangeable God, ever longing to show mercy, finds in Jesus Christ a way consistent with His own character to pardon the penitent.

[1] 1 S. John ii. 2, iv. 10.

[2] Rom. v. 10, xi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18–20; Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20, 21.

Reconciliation has a twofold meaning. Sometimes it is almost synonymous with propitiation, signifying that GOD is reconciled to man. Where we read that "GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself," the truth taught is that GOD's displeasure was removed, for it is added, "not imputing their trespasses unto them." But in S. Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians, "Be ye reconciled to GOD," the cessation of human enmity against GOD is clearly meant. On the one hand, therefore, GOD is reconciled to man; this is the Godward aspect of the Atonement. On the other hand, man is reconciled to GOD; this is its manward aspect.

At this point we are face to face with the mystery of the Atonement itself. Perplexing and difficult questions arise. As regards GOD, How was it possible for Him to be propitiated by the death of His own SON? As regards CHRIST, the Mediator, How could He, Who knew no sin, suffer for those who were sinners? And as regards man, How could the benefit of our LORD's work extend to mankind? These are deep things of GOD; things to be approached with fear, reverence, and humility; and in our efforts to contemplate them we are but as a child playing on the shore, whilst the ocean of truth stretches forth out of sight.

Two fundamental truths must form the basis of our conception of the Atonement—first, the oneness of the Godhead; secondly, the oneness of humanity.

i.

"The Godhead of the FATHER, of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, is all one."[1] This takes us to the Person of our Blessed LORD. The Atonement is based on the Incarnation. The Divinity of CHRIST is the key to the Christian position, and the centre around which the whole system of the Christian faith revolves. Accept it, and all other mysteries of the faith fall, as it were naturally, into their places. Deny it, and all is confusion. To one who holds, in its true sense, the doctrine of the Saviour's Divinity, it would seem strange if His moral character was not unique, if He did not work miracles, if He did not rise again from the dead. To one who does not hold the faith, the facts recorded in the Gospels present insurmountable difficulties. Not until Copernicus discovered the sun to be its centre, did astronomers understand the solar system. Similarly, right conception of the Christian religion is only possible when the doctrine of our LORD's Person, as set forth in Holy Scripture and the historic creeds, is accepted in all its fullness.

ii.

In no secondary sense, CHRIST is the SON of GOD. In the words of the creeds, He is "of the same substance with the FATHER"[2]; and "equal to the FATHER as touching His Godhead."[3] The

[1] Athanasian Creed. [2] Nicene Creed.
[3] Athanasian Creed.

indwelling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS is more than omnipresence. It is not the identification of the Creator with creation which Pantheism teaches. It is different in kind from GOD's immanence in human personality, different from the Divine indwelling in the believing heart. There is no ground for the assumption that a good man, on reaching perfection, may have GOD within him in the sense in which "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"[1] in CHRIST JESUS. The most holy saint is but man, even when he has reached the height of all possible perfection. But CHRIST is GOD. When the holiest of all the saints enters heaven, he takes his place in the multitude of worshippers. CHRIST, at His Ascension, sat on the throne, the object of worship by angels and men. The four living creatures "give glory and honour and thanks to Him"; and "the four-and-twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne."[2] CHRIST is never a worshipper, He is always the worshipped.

If asked why we believe CHRIST to be GOD, the simplest and shortest answer must be, Because He Himself says so; and His character, as revealed in the four Gospels, is such that we are content to take Him at His word. So elevated, so excellent, and so beautiful is the human life of our LORD that it has won universal admiration. Even those who do not admit

[1] Col. ii. 9. [2] Rev. iv. 9, 10.

that He is more than man, acknowledge that His goodness is unique and unparalleled. Can the testimony of such a One be relied upon? Surely it can. It is unthinkable that He should deceive Himself; impossible that He should deceive us.

Now our LORD, in plain language, claims equality with the FATHER. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the FATHER."[1] "I and My FATHER are one."[2] The Jews who listened to His teaching said that He was "making Himself equal with GOD."[3] They were right; our LORD did not say they had misunderstood Him. When S. Peter, in the name of the twelve, professed his faith in Him as "the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD,"[4] and S. Thomas saluted Him in the words, "My LORD and my GOD,"[5] He accepted for Himself the Divine adoration which the declarations implied. Placed on His oath before His judges in His last trial, He asserted that He did claim to be "the CHRIST, the SON of GOD."[6] So clear was the meaning of the assertion that the council regarded it as a blasphemy of such serious character as to be deserving of death.[7] His claim to be GOD was thus unmistakable; and bearing in mind that it was made by One so unequalled in goodness, so incomparable in elevation of moral character, we feel we can accept it without reserve.

[1] S. John xiv. 9. [2] Ibid. x. 30. [3] Ibid. v. 18.
[4] S. Matt. xvi. 16. [5] S. John xx. 28. [6] S. Matt. xxvi. 63.
[7] Ibid. xxvi. 65–7.

iii.

Our knowledge of the inner life of the Godhead is so limited, and our faculties for the comprehension of the mystery so inadequate, that we cannot hope to understand or explain fully the relationship of the death of the Incarnate Son to the eternal laws of God's Being. One thing we know—God is unchangeable. The Incarnation and the Atonement affected not the relationship to One Another of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity. From all eternity all the Three Persons loved each other. That love has continued without a shadow of interruption. Holiness, righteousness, and justice, which are the eternal attributes of each of the Three Persons, so far from being clouded over, were, on the contrary, revealed in brighter light by the birth in Bethlehem and the death on Calvary.

The wrath of God against sin is the wrath of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In becoming the propitiation for the sins of the world, the Incarnate Son not only appeased the Godhead of the Father and the Holy Ghost, He appeased His own Godhead also. In the sacrifice which He offered on the Cross He made a perfect satisfaction to the eternal character of the Godhead, equally shared by each of the Three Persons. The Father did not become Incarnate, nor did the Holy Ghost. The Son alone was made Man, He alone died for us. The Father and the Holy Ghost suffered not on

the Cross. But in virtue of the unity of the Divine Essence, the perfect loving obedience of the SON satisfied the demands of the righteousness, justice, and love which are the eternal laws of the life of the Blessed Three in One.

GOD is love; and nothing which is short of love can be acceptable with Him. It is the love of the Atonement which constitutes its redeeming power. Love, as well as justice, demands the condemnation and punishment of sin. It is the submission of infinite love, manifesting itself in obedience unto death, which has made pardon possible. In the well-known words of S. Bernard, "Not His death, but His willing acceptance of death was pleasing unto GOD."

The obedience of CHRIST was a willing and perfect obedience. The voluntariness of His sufferings was an essential element of the Atonement. Had CHRIST died against His will, His death would not have been a propitiation. He endured not the pains of the lost. Hell is suffering which has failed in its purpose.

And our LORD's atoning work was more than present obedience. It had reference also to sins past. Where a past wrong has not been cancelled or atoned for, present obedience, however complete, is insufficient. Penitence also becomes necessary; and the agony of our LORD was akin to the sorrow of deep repentance. The all-holy Incarnate SON, one with GOD and one with us, made "a perfect confession of our sins."[1] "The perfect sacrifice of penitence in the sinless

[1] McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 117.

CHRIST is the one atoning sacrifice for sin."[1] On the Cross, our LORD offered "not only the sacrifice of perfect obedience . . . but also the sacrifice of supreme penitence—that is, of perfect will-identity with GOD in condemnation of sin."[2] Perfect confession, or perfect penitence, is impossible, where sin, even one sin, exists. It is only unspotted purity that can perceive the true heinousness of sin. The penitent tears of fallen and sinful humanity, therefore, could never be an adequate satisfaction for the sins of the world. But to the pure and undefiled tears of the Incarnate SON GOD had respect. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, GOD sending His own SON in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."[3]

iv.

The equality of the Incarnate SON with the FATHER, in the unity of the Godhead, thus enabled Him to satisfy the eternal laws of the life of the Blessed Trinity. Similarly, His union with our nature has made it possible for Him, though sinless, to suffer as Man, and for man.

The truth of our LORD's manhood has always been jealously guarded by the Church as a priceless treasure. The same creed which asserts that He is "of one substance with the FATHER"

[1] Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (1907 Edition), p. 130.
[2] Ibid. p. 129. [3] Rom. viii. 3, 4.

asserts also that He "was incarnate by the HOLY GHOST of the Virgin Mary, and was made man."[1] And to guard against the error laid to the charge of Nestorius, she declares "Although He be GOD and Man, yet He is not two, but one CHRIST."[2]

All through the four Gospels the true Man is seen. His human growth was like that of other children. He was an infant at birth, a lad at twelve years of age, and an adult at thirty. After a long fast He was an hungred ; a tedious journey in the heat of the day brought on fatigue and thirst. The sorrows of friends moved Him to tears ; whilst the unbelief of His countrymen caused Him to look about, in the synagogue, with anger. Like other men, He possessed the three parts of human nature—body, soul, and spirit. His body bled under the scourge of Pontius Pilate ; His soul was exceeding sorrowful in the Garden of Gethsemane ; and on the Cross He commended His spirit into the FATHER'S hands. In all things He was made like unto His brethren, sin only excepted.

Here lies the key to our LORD'S ability to suffer for the sins of men. There was no transfer of the guilt of others to Him ; nor was He compelled to die as if He were a guilty person. We must rather seek light on this mysterious fact from our LORD'S power of sympathy with the race with which He had become identified in the Incarnation.

Let us put the matter in this form. It is a fact of common experience that a man's own sin

[1] Nicene Creed. [2] Athanasian Creed.

brings pain upon himself. But can my sin be the cause of suffering to another, who is innocent? An analogy, imperfect as it may be, is here helpful. Take the case of an ancient, upright, and much respected family. All the members of it, in one day, fall into temptation, and commit theft, deceit, and falsehood. There is, however, one member, the mother, who retains her integrity. Is she, though innocent, affected at all by the shame and disgrace of the members of her family? She feels it bitterly; and, by reason of her innocence, even more bitterly than the rest. And why? She is one of the family. Owing to her identity of blood with them, whatever affects the children affects the mother also.[1]

CHRIST is one with the human race in a more real sense than even a mother is one with her family. His passion and death were not things which took place outside of us, but in our nature —in that nature which is common to Him and to us. Such is the unity of humanity that if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."[2] By reason of His identification with us He is able to enter into the feelings of sinful man, and to bear the consequences of the sins of the world. The sinlessness and perfect innocency of CHRIST enable Him to enter more deeply into the sufferings which are the consequences of sin than is possible for sinful man. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same."[3]

[1] Cf. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality*, chap. vi.
[2] 1 Cor. xii. 26. [3] Heb. ii. 14.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." [1]

v.

Akin to the question we have just been considering is another. How can the sufferings of CHRIST be of benefit to us?

A small child once asked a clergyman to explain the line in a children's hymn, "He died to make us good." The child could not see what connection there was between CHRIST dying and his being made good. The mystery of the Atonement is such as to strike the mind of a child; and we can do little more than accept the fact by faith.

But here, again, experience affords us the light of analogy. As a matter of fact, we find that it is not unusual, in the ways of Divine Providence, that the labours and pains of others should bring blessings to ourselves. Our very existence is ours through the pangs of the mother who bore us. The skinless arm of an injured man is healed by the skilful and sympathetic doctor who takes a piece of his own skin, and places it on the wounded part. The knowledge we derive from books is the fruit of the weary thought and sleepless nights of painstaking writers. The peace which we enjoy in our own country has been purchased by the blood of our brave soldiers, who perished on the battlefield.

As it is union with us which brought CHRIST to

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

the Cross, so it is in union with Him we are made partakers of its benefits. As there was no transfer of guilt, in His death, so there is no transfer of merit, in our salvation. S. Paul, indeed, speaks of righteousness being "imputed" [1] to them that believe. But imputation is not transfer. The Revised Version makes this clearer when it speaks of righteousness being "reckoned." The blessings of the Atonement are ours through no legal fiction, but in virtue of our participation in the Divine Nature through the Incarnate Son. Personal union with Him brings us personal benefits. This is what is taught us by our Lord when He speaks of Himself as the vine, and His people as the branches which receive of its sap.[2] The truth permeates the doctrine of S. Paul. With him to be "in Christ" [3] is salvation. To them that are "in Christ Jesus," [4] there is no condemnation. The earnest desire of his soul, and his constant prayer to God is that he may "be found in Him," [5] not having his own righteousness.

vi.

On the aspect of the Atonement, looking towards man, a few words must suffice ; and it is the less mysterious side of the subject.

It is not enough that God has opened for the sinner a way of return to Himself : man needs a strong motive to lead him back. It is our

[1] Rom. iv. 11. [2] S. John xv. 1–8. [3] 2 Cor. v. 17.
[4] Rom. viii. 1. [5] Phil. iii. 9.

LORD's complaint to the Jews, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."[1] The guests who received an invitation to the marriage of the King's Son, "made light of it, and went their ways."[2] But our LORD knew that there lay in His Cross a power of irresistible attraction. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."[3]

S. Paul says two things about the Cross of CHRIST as a power of attraction. It is, first, an exhibition of Divine justice; secondly, an exhibition of Divine love.

Justice has its attraction to the human heart. Men are repelled by injustice. JESUS CHRIST is He "Whom GOD hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His Blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of GOD."[4] Divine righteousness had indeed been "declared" by other means. Adam and Eve had been driven out of the garden; the corrupt world had been drowned by a flood; the wicked cities of the plain had been burnt to ashes. But so great was the "forbearance of GOD," that man was in danger of losing sight of the true nature of sin, and the beauty of righteousness. But a fiercer light beat upon Calvary. "GOD sending His own SON in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."[5] That condemnation of sin was a spectacle which touched the human heart, as nothing else had ever done,

[1] S. John v. 40. [2] S. Matt. xxii. 5. [3] S. John xii. 32.
[4] Rom. iii. 25. [5] Ibid. viii. 3.

or could do. The power of the Cross to convict of sin is unequalled. It was by turning their eyes to it that the HOLY GHOST, on the day of Pentecost, led the three thousand souls to seek spiritual deliverance.[1] Zechariah, foreseeing the outpouring of the Spirit of grace, could describe the effect of a look on the Crucified: "They shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son."[2] The light of Calvary reveals sin in all its hatefulness; and, kneeling at the foot of the Cross, men learn to flee from the wrath to come.

Stronger still is the attraction of the Cross as a manifestation of GOD's infinite love. "GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us."[3] Even more than His justice, the goodness of GOD leadeth men to repentance.[4] Divine love, as declared in the death of the Incarnate SON, disarms the opposition of the human heart, and slays its enmity. The contemplation of the self-sacrifice of JESUS CHRIST counteracts the selfishness which keeps the soul away from Him; it inspires confidence of approach to the FATHER in heaven. The human heart, exposing itself here to the light and warmth of Divine love, is changed into that image. Penitent sinners in humble submission of faith acknowledge themselves conquered and won.

Love begets love. "We love Him, because He first loved us."[5]

[1] Acts ii. 41, 42. [2] Zech. xii. 10. [3] Rom. v. 8.
[4] Ibid. ii. 4. [5] 1 S. John iv. 19.

INSTRUCTION VIII

Forgiveness of Sins

Divine pardon, which is the first-fruit of the Atonement, is the attitude of God towards the penitent sinner. So long as man is identified with sin, which is the object of Divine wrath, the state of alienation between God and man continues. The forgiven man is dissociated and separated from sin, and is found on the side of righteousness and holiness. A real change of relationship between the soul and the Father in heaven has taken place. Where there was wrath and enmity, there is now favour and love.

i.

Hebrew scholars point out that in the Old Testament three Hebrew terms express the idea of forgiveness. The exact literal meaning of one of the three has not been definitely ascertained ; and it does not, therefore, help us in our present study. Of the remaining two, one signifies "to cover," and the other "to take away." [1]

[1] The Rev. S. L. Brown, Warden of the Church Hostel, Bangor, informs me that until quite recently *kipper* was generally believed to mean "to cover." Robertson Smith,

Two corresponding ideas are expressed by two Greek terms in the New Testament. The former conception is contained in the word πάρεσις, which is used by S. Paul alone, and by him once only. The English rendering of the word in the Authorized Version is "remission," with "passing over" in the margin. In the Revised Version "passing over" has been transferred to the text. "Whom GOD set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His Blood, to show His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime."[1] Under this metaphor of passing over, forgiveness is presented to the mind in the simple form of not punishing the sinner. It is the "forbearance" of GOD, Who is ever patient and longsuffering. In the language of earth, He makes as if He saw not. As S. Paul said to the people of Athens, "The times of this ignorance GOD winked at," or overlooked.[2] The Apostle uses the word in reference to GOD's merciful dealings with men before the coming of CHRIST. It would be out of place here to dwell on the controversy which once raged around the passage, or to discuss the question whether, under the old dispensation, GOD's faithful people received forgiveness of sins in the fullest sense

however, always thought it meant "to wash," "wipe off," or "obliterate." And now many scholars connect it with an Assyrian word which means "to clean," "make bright or white"; and they consider that even in Arabic *kafara* originally meant "wipe out" or "obliterate," not "cover." *Nāsā*, Mr. Brown says, means "to take away," "to lift up."

[1] Rom. iii. 25, R.V. [2] Acts xvii. 30.

of the word ; or only a temporary blessing, consisting only in the withholding of punishment for the time. This passage by itself does not appear to settle the question. The truth taught by the expression chosen by the Apostle is that forgiveness, looked at from one point of view, is non-infliction of the penalty which the sinner has incurred. This is not the whole of forgiveness ; but it is one aspect of it. Sin is hidden from God's eyes ; He turns away His face from it ; He does not punish it. It is covered ; He overlooks it ; passes it over.

Divine pardon is more than this. The stronger word, ἄφεσις, is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. It is the usual term by which God's forgiveness is expressed. It is employed to describe the blessings of the two great Sacraments of the Gospel. With reference to Baptism, it is found in S. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" [1] ; and in regard to Holy Communion, in the words of institution, "This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." [2] According to S. Paul, it is the "redemption through His Blood." [3] The original conception was borrowed from the release of the Jewish Jubilee—the proclamation of universal liberty, and the setting free of all slaves. Thence the higher spiritual meaning—complete freedom from sin itself, and from its power and defilement and guilt.

[1] Acts ii. 38. [2] S. Matt. xxvi. 28. [3] Eph. i. 7.

ii.

Human forgiveness affords a mirror in which we may "see darkly" what the forgiveness of God means. Man's forgiveness of injuries, in a measure, reflects God's forgiveness of sins. Our petition in the Lord's Prayer is, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Man forgives; God forgives. There is some similarity between the two acts; and the resemblance on man's part ought to be greater. S. Paul, therefore, in exhorting the Ephesians to be kind, adds, "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."[1]

Parental forgiveness presents, perhaps, the best earthly illustration of Divine pardon. A mother, in forgiving her much-loved but offending child, does two things. First, she does not inflict the punishment which the child knows he deserves. Secondly, she restores him into the relationship of love and confidence, which is natural between parent and child. The offending child not only escapes the stripes and the mother's disfavour, but is also admitted into the sunshine of her motherly care and affection. And where the mother is actuated by the proper motive, her conduct throughout is dictated by the desire to improve the child's character.

So complete and perfect and absolute is the redemption and restoration of the sinner in God's loving forgiveness that it cannot be fully expressed in any human language, nor reflected

[1] Eph. iv. 32.

perfectly in any human relationship. It is by experience alone the penitent soul enters into the full meaning of that "peace with GOD," which is "through our LORD JESUS CHRIST."[1]

iii.

Divine pardon is as much an act of Divine justice as an act of Divine love. GOD forgives because it is righteous and just that He should forgive; and because non-forgiveness would be injustice. It has respect to the character of the forgiven, as will appear later on.[2] Think again of the earthly type. A wise mother shows her disfavour towards her offending child so long as he remains stubborn; but when he submits, she receives him into her arms. This is conduct on which our moral sense puts its seal of approval. On the one hand, the human conscience would not sanction indifference on the part of a mother towards the persistent wrong-doing of her child. It expects her to punish. On the other hand, it would not approve of her refusal to forgive on his submission and repentance. It would be wrong to pardon the rebellious and impenitent. To forgive the obedient and penitent is right and just.

Not that Divine pardon finds justification in human penitence. That fallen humanity should be able to come before GOD with sinless and adequate repentance is impossible. If that were possible, the question might arise whether such a repentance might not atone. But the question

[1] Rom. v. 1. [2] Instruction ix.

does not arise. The thing is unthinkable. The sacrifice and satisfaction for the sin of the world which is acceptable with GOD must be looked for elsewhere. And we look not in vain. GOD has provided Himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering.[1] It is in forgiving through the Incarnate SON, and through Him alone, that GOD is "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in JESUS."[2] It is not that GOD is just in spite of being the Justifier. On the contrary, because He is the Justifier, He shows Himself to be just.

The mystery of this deep truth is illuminated by the doctrine of our union with CHRIST. We have seen that the SON of GOD, by dwelling in human nature, was able to suffer for the sin of the race with which He identified Himself, and to share its curse. Similarly, the penitent soul, by being united with the Incarnate SON, and incorporated with Him, acquires the righteousness of His pure and spotless humanity, and becomes partaker of its blessings. The penitent and believing soul is "in the Beloved"; and for that reason he is "accepted."[3] Character, it is true, is slow of growth. There is no instantaneous process whereby "the man of GOD may be perfect."[4] Perfection is a consummation gradually reached. But already GOD sees its beginnings in the penitent submissive spirit, and is well pleased. As it was an act of justice on the part of GOD to accept the perfect obedience and self-sacrifice of His SON, so also it is an act of justice on His part

[1] Gen. xxii. 8.
[2] Rom. iii. 26.
[3] Eph. i. 6.
[4] 2 Tim. iii. 17.

to accept the submission of the penitent who becomes united and identified with CHRIST.

The CHRIST with Whom the believing soul is united is not the dead CHRIST, but the living. The energy which works mightily in the human heart, and which transforms it into the Divine image, is the energy of the life which has passed through death, and which has conquered. It is the power of the Resurrection, the power of the endless life of Him Who "was dead," but is "alive for evermore,"[1] which brings man into conformity to the will of GOD. In the words of S. Paul, "we shall be saved by His life."[2]

iv.

Union with CHRIST thus involves sharing in His righteousness. It also implies participation in His sufferings. Pardon is to be distinguished from innocence. The state of redeemed man can never be quite the same as that of the holy angels. It is impossible to recall the past: sin once committed cannot be undone. The joys of consummated penitence may be as great as the joys of spotless innocence; they may even be greater. But they are not identical. The redeemed in heaven have a new song of their own; "and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."[3] The righteousness of redeemed man is not the righteousness of innocence, but the righteousness of repentance. The Atonement

[1] Rev. i. 18. [2] Rom. v. 10. [3] Rev. xiv. 3.

for sin has not made discipline unnecessary for the sinner. CHRIST has not suffered for us in the sense that no sufferings are left for us to endure. Although the sin of David was put away, yet his subsequent life was not what it would have been if he had not broken the sixth and seventh commandments. "The sword shall never depart from thine house. . . . The child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."[1] Even the Prodigal Son, in spite of the loving welcome extended to him by his father, did not find the old home what it would have been if he had never left it. He had to face the displeasure of a brother who "would not go in."[2]

This is a truth which is confirmed both by the analogy of nature and by our own spiritual experience. The hand put into the fire smarts for a time, though under treatment by the most skilful of medical men. The reproaches of conscience make themselves heard long after confession and pardon. The tradition that S. Peter, after his fall, never heard the cock crow without shedding tears may not be historically authentic ; but it is true to human experience.

As CHRIST, in consequence of His union with our nature, "suffered for us,"[3] so also we, through union with Him, "suffer with Him."[4] The language of S. Paul on this subject is almost startling : "I bear in my body the marks of the LORD JESUS."[5] It is not necessary to regard

[1] 2 Sam. xii. 10–14.
[2] S. Luke xv. 28.
[3] 1 S. Peter iv. 1.
[4] Rom. viii. 17.
[5] Gal. vi. 17.

these "stigmata" as bodily wounds, resembling those on the crucified body of our LORD, arising as the effect of constant inward meditation on His Passion, such as tradition asserts to have occurred in the case of some of the saints of old.[1] They were probably scars of wounds received under persecution, and were regarded by the Apostle as wounds inflicted on CHRIST Himself, in virtue of the oneness existing between him and his LORD. So deeply conscious was S. Paul of his union with CHRIST that he speaks of it in terms of identity: "I am crucified with CHRIST"[2]; "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of CHRIST."[3] "I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me."[4] These expressions may not, of course, be taken in their strictly literal sense. But they forcibly set forth the reality of man's union with CHRIST. It is by "the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,"[5] that Christians are accepted with GOD, and hope to "attain the resurrection of the dead," even "the resurrection of the just."[6]

V.

The grace of Divine pardon in JESUS CHRIST is a gift of renewal. Union with CHRIST, and forgiveness in that union, has for its purpose the restoration of man into the image of GOD. The HOLY GHOST—the finger of GOD—working

[1] Vide Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, chap. xvii.
[2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] Col. i. 24. [4] Gal. ii. 20.
[5] Phil. iii. 10, 11. [6] S. Luke xiv. 14.

from within, moulds the human character so that eventually, when we shall see CHRIST as He is, "we shall be like Him."[1]

Far-reaching and disastrous as the ravages of sin are, Divine pardon makes perfect and complete reparation.[2] Sin is the plague of the heart; pardon is the medicine which restores it to perfect spiritual health. Sin is the fall from the precipice, and the smashing of the limbs; in forgiveness the bones which were broken shall rejoice. Sin is the dark unclean stain which defiles the heart; GOD's forgiveness is the washing with hyssop which makes it whiter than snow. Sin is the prison of captivity: in forgiveness the prison-door is opened and the prisoner set free. Sin is the casting away from the Divine Presence; in His pardon GOD gives unto the soul the comfort of His help again, and establishes it with His free Spirit.[3]

Contemplate two pictures taken from the Gospels. First, the demoniac as he is when CHRIST comes to Gadara. His dwelling is among the tombs—the abode of the dead. Resisting all order and discipline, no man can bind him. Inflicting injuries upon his own person, he cuts himself with stones. Under a false idea of freedom, he breaks fetters and chains and is driven by the devil into the desolate wilderness. Distracted and miserable in mind, he is heard crying in the lonely mountains and tombs. He is a

[1] 1 S. John iii. 2.

[2] Vide Canon Newbolt's *Penitence and Peace*, iii.

[3] Vide Ps. li.

danger to others; no man can pass that way. The presence of the Saviour is intolerable to him, and he exclaims, "I adjure Thee by GOD that Thou torment me not." The title of the picture is, "A soul under the dominion of sin."

But there is another picture—CHRIST lands in Gadara. He meets the demoniac, and speaks the word of power, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." It is the Voice that said, "Let there be light, and there was light"; the Voice which pronounced over the sinner, "Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." And mark what follows—the men of Gadara drew near to look at the result, "And they came to JESUS, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of JESUS, clothed, and in his right mind."[1] This picture bears a title also, "The forgiven soul."

"Thanks be to GOD for His unspeakable gift."[2]

[1] S. Luke viii. 26–36. [2] 2 Cor. ix. 15.

INSTRUCTION IX

The Conditions of Forgiveness

God's readiness to forgive is one of the plainest truths taught in Holy Scripture. Had it not been so, the Gospel of Christ would have been meaningless. And yet Divine pardon is not, and cannot be, unconditional. Something must take place on the side of God to enable Him to forgive, and something on the part of man to make him capable of receiving pardon. That something on the side of God is atonement; on the part of man it is renunciation of sin. The latter may be considered under three heads—first, repentance; secondly, a forgiving spirit; thirdly, submission to Christ's methods. Without the disposition of heart which is here implied, man is incapable of God's forgiveness. Not only would pardon be unjust on the side of God, it would also be impossible on the side of man. An unwilling acceptance of forgiveness is unthinkable. To speak of a compulsory restoration of character in a free agent would be to use contradictory terms. A preparation of the heart is an essential condition of pardon.

i.

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"[1]; so spake our LORD to the Jews. Repentance may be described as the first need of the sinful soul. When John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the LORD, his first cry in the wilderness was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2] Our LORD, in entering upon His public ministry, made Repentance the subject of His first sermon. "From that day JESUS began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[3] After the ascension into heaven, and the descent of the HOLY GHOST on the Day of Pentecost, the Church's first message was none other. When men, pricked in their heart, asked what they were to do, the first word from S. Peter's lips was "Repent."[4] Moreover, this first message of the Gospel to sinners was meant to be permanent. It is the will of our LORD that in His Church, throughout all ages, "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name."[5]

What is repentance? The Greek word *μετάνοια* signifies a change of mind. Primarily it is after-knowledge; then, after-thought; thirdly, the sorrow which accompanies the change of mind; and lastly, the change of heart and life into which a real change of mind leads. In a word, repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change of character.

It is the gift of JESUS CHRIST working inwardly

[1] S. Luke xiii. 3. [2] S. Matt. iii. 2. [3] Ibid. iv. 17.
[4] Acts ii, 38. [5] S. Luke xxiv. 47.

in the heart by the operation of the HOLY GHOST. CHRIST has ascended "for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."[1] According to our LORD's promise, the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, "convinces of sin."[2] In His illuminating light, sin is made to show itself in its true character. It is no longer a thing to be justified, treated lightly, or ignored. The sinner assumes towards it a changed attitude.

There are three principal parts of repentance—sorrow, confession, amendment. Each of the three is essential; where one is lacking, repentance is defective. The repentance of Judas Iscariot[3] was an incomplete repentance. He was indeed sorrowful after betraying his LORD. "When he saw that He was condemned he repented himself." He made a confession, "I have betrayed the innocent Blood." But there was no amendment of life; for "he went and hanged himself." He turned away indeed from his base treachery with sorrow, shame, and disgust; he confessed that he had done wrong; but he did no more. If he had turned his face to JESUS CHRIST for the grace of amendment of life, Judas Iscariot would have come to a very different end.

Contrast the case of S. Peter. He also sinned, for he denied his LORD. But at the loving look of the Master "he went out, and wept bitterly."[4] That was sorrow. When the LORD was risen indeed, and had appeared to Simon,[5] and the

[1] Acts v. 31. [2] S. John xvi. 8, margin. [3] S. Matt. xxvii. 3–5.
[4] Ibid. xxvi. 75. [5] S. Luke xxiv. 34.

two met alone, there must surely have been a humble and heartfelt confession on the part of the fallen disciple. And there was more. Amendment of life followed. Never again did the Apostle deny his LORD.

ii.

That a forgiving spirit is an essential condition of forgiveness has been laid down by our LORD in His teaching with unmistakable emphasis. In the Sermon on the Mount He makes His meaning abundantly clear, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your FATHER forgive your trespasses." The words have reference to the petition in the LORD'S Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." That prayer to be effectual must be offered up with a disposition of heart to do as GOD does. We ask Him to do as we do, to forgive "as we forgive." It is only "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly FATHER will also forgive you."[1]

Single acts of forgiveness do not satisfy the condition. It demands a habitual disposition of heart, an ever-ready willingness to act. S. Peter had not fully understood the doctrine of his LORD when he asked, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" The answer of CHRIST put the matter in the right light, showing that it is not a question of any limited number of acts, but rather a state of heart

[1] S. Matt. vi. 12, 14.

—"I say not unto thee, Until seven times ; but, Until seventy times seven."[1]

The truth is more fully emphasized and illustrated by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. It is here shown that GOD's forgiveness is, in a sense, provisional : continuing as long as the forgiving spirit of the penitent lasts, and dependent upon it. The servant who had once been forgiven his debt by his lord, was afterwards delivered to the tormentors, because he refused to forgive a fellow-servant. "So likewise shall My heavenly FATHER do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[2]

The Church follows in the footsteps of her LORD. She teaches the young that it is required of them who come to the LORD's Supper "to be in charity with all men."[3] She warns her communicants that they must be "ready to forgive others that have offended them, as they would have forgiveness at GOD's hand."[4] Moreover, she lays it as a duty upon every curate in regard to those betwixt whom malice and hatred reign, that "he suffer them not to be partakers of the LORD's Table, until he know them to be reconciled."[5]

The reason why a forgiving spirit is an essential condition of pardon appears when we consider that, in its principle, it is conformity to the law of love. It is, therefore, a disposition of heart

[1] S. Matt. xviii. 21, 22.
[2] S. Matt. xviii. 23–35. Vide also S. Mark xi. 25.
[3] Church Catechism. [4] Communion Service.
[5] Rubric in Communion Service.

which brings the penitent to be on the side of GOD as against sin. It is impossible for love to be unforgiving. "GOD is love"; there is therefore forgiveness with Him. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in GOD," and he acts as GOD acts. The principle may be put to the test in our relation to our fellow-men: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD Whom he hath not seen?"[1]

The precept which our LORD taught in the Sermon on the Mount was practised by Him on the Cross. "Pray for them which despitefully use you"[2]—that was the precept. "FATHER, forgive them; for they know not what they do"[3]—here is the practice. He prayed for His crucifiers; and as He prayed, He forgave. His example has been recorded for our profit. Forgiveness of injuries is often a hard duty. To some it is more difficult than almost any other. Where is the needful help to be sought? Our LORD's example points to prayer and intercession. Let there be earnest prayer day after day for the offender, let him be brought by name to the throne of grace; and malice and hatred will cease, and the spirit of forgiveness will grow. The duty must first be acknowledged. There must be an honest desire to be able to forgive. Even if there be no immediate success, the effort itself will be acceptable with GOD. This, like other Divine graces, is a plant of slow growth. Eventually no one need despair to rise up to the high Christian stan-

[1] 1 S. John iv. 16–21. [2] S. Matt. v. 44.
[3] S. Luke xxiii. 34.

dard, placed before us by our LORD when He bids us not only to forgive, but also to love our enemies.[1]

iii.

The consideration of CHRIST's methods leads us to the thought of the Church which He has founded, and the Sacraments which He has ordained therein. For what is the Church but the appointed sphere of Divine blessings, and the home of pardon? And what are the Sacraments but His own chosen channels of grace, "means whereby we receive the same"?[2]

One of the sayings of the great forty days, at this point, invites attention: "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."[3] The Greek verb, ἀφῆτε, here rendered "remit," is usually translated "forgive"; and so in the Revised Version we have, "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven."

They are startling words. If they had been uttered by any other lips than those of CHRIST, we might have been tempted to turn away from them as too strange to deserve attention. But they are His words. We may not disregard them under the pretence that they are unintelligible, or too difficult. Moreover, they have to

[1] S. Matt. v. 44. [2] Church Catechism.
[3] S. John xx. 22, 23.

do with us personally, and have a practical bearing on the blessing of forgiveness. Nor can it be alleged that they were addressed to the first Apostles alone, and to none other. "The gift was once for all, not to individuals but to the abiding body."[1] The Church has always believed that they have reference to every age. At the ordination of a candidate for the priesthood, the ordaining bishop pronounces over him the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."[2] We are thus face to face with the question, In what sense is the power to forgive sins given unto men?

The saying must be studied in the light of the rest of Divine truth. It is not lawful so to expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.[3] There are three Christian principles clearly taught in the Bible, which it is necessary to keep in mind. First, God alone forgives sins. No one else can. The offence is against Him; and pardon must proceed from His compassionate and merciful Heart. The scribes were right: "Who can forgive sins but God only?"[4]

Secondly, The penitent alone receives forgiveness. Impenitence places a bar against the entrance of Divine grace. The Saviour "could

[1] Westcott in loc.
[2] The Ordering of Priests.
[3] Article xx.
[4] S. Mark ii. 7.

do no mighty work" among certain of His countrymen, "because of their unbelief."[1]

Thirdly, GOD usually works through means. His blessings, generally speaking, are not poured down direct from heaven. They flow through appointed channels. It is GOD Who gives us our daily bread; but He gives it through the toil of the husbandman. Knowledge is His gift; but He imparts it through diligent study. He restores the sick to health; but He uses medicine and medical skill as His means. Similarly, there are Divinely-ordained channels through which He bestows His spiritual blessings.

Looked at in the light of these principles, we may learn the meaning of our LORD's mysterious saying. The power to forgive sins, which He has committed to His Church, is power and authority to use the means of forgiveness which He has ordained, and through which the HOLY GHOST works invisibly in the heart. The ministration is human; the blessing is the gift of GOD.

What are the means of grace to which CHRIST has specially attached forgiveness of sins? The first is Holy Baptism. On the Day of Pentecost men were taught that they needed two things, repentance and Baptism; repentance to prepare the heart to receive forgiveness; Baptism to be the means through which it was imparted. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins."[2] Saul of Tarsus, after the vision of CHRIST on the way

[1] S. Mark. vi. 5; S. Matt. xiii. 58. [2] Acts ii. 38.

to Damascus, received from Him this message, "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins." [1] The first Sacrament is sometimes regarded as a covenant with GOD, and an admission into the Church, which is His family. It is this, and because it is this, it must necessarily be more. For it is inconceivable that GOD should receive us into covenant, and admit us into His family, without also at the same time forgiving us. Without hesitation, therefore, we stand up to recite our Creed, "I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." [2]

There is one Baptism, and only one. It can never be repeated. But one forgiveness is not sufficient. GOD has therefore provided other means whereby we may be repeatedly cleansed from repeated sins. "He hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." [3] Here GOD uses the human lips of His ministers to be the channel of blessings. As S. Paul testifies, "GOD hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," "We are ambassadors for CHRIST." [4] Here again the ambassadors are men; but the reconciliation is the work of GOD.

Again, the words of our LORD at the institution of the Holy Communion associates forgiveness of sins with the cup of blessing in that Sacrament: "This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you for the remission of

[1] Acts xxii. 16.
[2] Nicene Creed.
[3] Order for Morning Prayer.
[4] 2 Cor. v. 18, 20.

sins."[1] The pardon here imparted is a higher gift than that of Baptism and Absolution. We keep asking for it almost to the end of the Communion Service. We come to the Sacrament as baptized persons; we receive it after confession made and absolution pronounced. But, even after this, we approach our heavenly FATHER with the petition that "we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion."[2] As in this blessed Sacrament we are brought into closer union with CHRIST than in any other means of grace, so also in it we attain unto a fuller freedom from sin; and our complete deliverance draws nigh, even "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."[3]

These methods of CHRIST, it is true, by their very simplicity, are an offence to the pride of the human heart. It is asked, What good is it to pour water on a person in the Name of the Blessed Trinity? Can a word spoken by the lips of a minister of CHRIST be of any effect? How is it possible that such simple elements as bread and wine, blessed by His word, may be the means whereby the soul may feed upon CHRIST? These are the questions of unbelief. They arise from lack of genuine confidence in JESUS CHRIST, Who ordained the means of grace. To profit by the Sacraments we need a humble, submissive, and obedient heart. Confidence in the LORD GOD of Israel led Naaman eventually

[1] S. Matt. xxvi. 28. [2] Prayer after Communion.
[3] Rom. xiii. 11.

to wash in Jordan ; and he was cleansed of his leprosy. The man born blind, through confidence in JESUS CHRIST, suffered his eyes to be anointed with clay, and obeyed the command to wash in Siloam, and his eyes were opened. Similarly, where there is living faith in CHRIST, full trust and confidence in Him, it is enough that Baptism is His appointment, that Holy Communion was instituted by Him ; that the word of reconciliation and peace is spoken by His command and authority. Faith penetrates through the means unto the spiritual grace itself ; and soars even unto Him Who is the personal Saviour, and the Giver of all spiritual gifts.

INSTRUCTION X

Benefits of the Atonement in the Holy Communion

The Holy Communion is founded on the Atonement. It is the memorial of the one Sacrifice offered once for all on Calvary. The Incarnate Son of God gave Himself for us on the Cross, in order that He might give Himself to us in this blessed Sacrament. In the discourse at the synagogue of Capernaum our Lord places together these two acts of giving—"The Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."[1] In the latter part of the verse, it is the gift of Himself on Calvary; in the former part, the gift of Himself in this great means of grace. The same truth is beautifully expressed in the first exhortation of the Communion Service, where we read that God "hath given His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament."

The Holy Communion may be regarded under a twofold aspect: it is an act of worship, and it is a means of grace. In worship we give to God:

[1] S. John vi. 51.

in means of grace GOD gives to us. On the one hand we present ourselves to the FATHER in union with CHRIST our Propitiation: and on the other, He gives unto us His SON to be our eternal life.

It is, moreover, the highest act of worship, the principal means of grace. The position occupied by the altar in our churches might teach us this. The font is placed at the door, signifying that Baptism is the entrance into the Church. The altar is at the east end, showing that the Holy Communion is the furthest point to which we can go in the Church militant in earth. To approach nearer to CHRIST than in this Sacrament, we must needs be with Him in Paradise.

Three principal truths are contained in the Scriptural doctrine of the Holy Communion—first, access to the Presence of CHRIST; secondly, remembrance of the death of CHRIST; thirdly, reception of CHRIST Himself.

i.

The special Presence of our LORD in His Church is no contradiction of the truth that, as the Incarnate SON of GOD, He is omnipresent. "By essence, by presence, and by power GOD is everywhere." At the same time our LORD says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."[1] We cannot but think of GOD as specially present in particular places and on particular occasions.

[1] S. Matt. xviii. 20.

To our minds He is specially present in heaven. There is a sense in which He is near us when we kneel in prayer in our secret chambers. When we assemble together for any act of public worship we "come before His Presence."[1] But in the Holy Communion, He is present in a more real and more special sense than in any other means of grace. Here He indeed fulfils His promise and "comes to us"[2]; even as He came to the eleven on the first day of the week.

Various efforts have been made to explain the manner of our LORD's Presence in this holy Sacrament. It has been even asserted that it is only a memory of our absent LORD, the sacred elements being but empty signs and figures intended only to remind us of Him. This is to reduce a Christian Sacrament to the low level of a Jewish rite; and is inconsistent with the reality which characterizes the Christian religion. Those who take this view make the Sacrament merely a help to meditation. The theory was never heard of till the middle of the sixteenth century; and it is a wholly inadequate view of so great a mystery.

Another attempted explanation is known as Consubstantiation, which means that the Body and Blood of CHRIST are added to the bread and wine, as heat is added to iron in the fire. Broached for the first time by Martin Luther, this likewise bears the marks of novelty. It has never been accepted as its creed by any part of the historic Church.

[1] Ps. xcv. 2. [2] S. John xiv. 18.

A third attempt is found in Transubstantiation, according to which the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, the accidents, however, remaining unchanged. In its present defined form, this also is a new doctrine, dating from the sixteenth century.

It is true that the word "transubstantiated" had been tacitly accepted by a Roman Council early in the thirteenth century [1]; but not until nearly three hundred and forty years afterwards was the present definition of the doctrine formally authorized.[2] Previous to the Council of Trent, Transubstantiation, in its present defined form, could not be said to be the authorized creed of the Roman communion. The Roman Canon of the Mass, having been allowed to remain practically what it was in the latter part of the sixth century, bears silent testimony that Transubstantiation is a doctrinal innovation; for it contains neither the word nor the doctrine. The definition has the disadvantage of being based on a metaphysical theory, about the truth of which opinions may differ. Moreover it is "repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, and overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament."[3]

[1] "JESUS CHRISTUS, cujus corpus et sanguis in Sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur, transubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem."—iv *Conc. Lat.* cap. i, A.D. 1215.

[2] "Per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiae panis in substantiam Corporis CHRISTI DOMINI nostri, et totius substantiae vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus." —*Conc. Trident.* Sess. xiii, cap. 4, A.D. 1551.

[3] Article xxviii.

The Anglican Church is satisfied with the position occupied by the Church Universal in the early centuries. It offers no explanation of a mystery which is beyond the power of man to explain. Apart from views, theories, and definitions, it accepts the fact, and is content. We believe that our LORD is really present in His Sacrament. When we kneel at the altar, we doubt not, we are face to face with Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. This is enough : we ask not how. We worship Him ; we adore Him ; we receive Him ; we thank Him for His love.

ii.

Two expressions set forth the memorial aspect of the LORD's Supper ; one from the lips of our LORD, "This do in remembrance of Me"[1] ; the other from the pen of S. Paul, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the LORD's death till He come."[2] What is the nature of this remembrance ? To whom do we show the LORD's death ?

In a secondary sense we show the LORD's death in this Sacrament to ourselves. The breaking of the bread and the outpouring of the wine serve to remind us of the Body bruised and the Blood shed on the Cross. Moreover, we show it to the Church and to the world. The celebration of the Sacrament, as often as it takes place, bears testimony that the Death and Resurrection of CHRIST are certain historical facts.

[1] S. Luke xxii. 19. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

But the words have a deeper and truer meaning. The Holy Communion is not only a memorial before man ; it is a memorial before GOD. We here show the death of our LORD, and plead its merits, before the FATHER in heaven. In the words of Dr. Bright's beautiful hymn :

> "We here present, we here spread forth to Thee
> That only Offering perfect in Thine eyes,
> The one true, pure immortal Sacrifice.
> Look, FATHER, look on His anointed Face,
> And only look on us as found in Him."[1]

It is the idea contained in the word "remembrance," used by our Blessed LORD. We have already pointed out the importance of studying the New Testament in the light of the Old.[2] Our LORD, in using the word, did not divorce it from the meaning it has in the Old Testament Scripture. There it signifies a memorial, or showing forth, before GOD. The frankincense on the shewbread is described as "a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD."[3] The breastplate of judgement containing the names of the children of Israel, borne by Aaron upon his breast, on entering into the holy place, was "for a memorial before the LORD continually."[4] The word "memorial" in these passages is that which our LORD has chosen in instituting the LORD's Supper. The Holy Communion is thus an act done before GOD—putting Him continually in remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of His beloved SON.

[1] *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1889 edition), 322.
[2] Instruction xi. [3] Lev. xxiv. 7. [4] Ex. xxviii. 29.

Not that it was possible for GOD ever to forget the Atonement made on the Cross ; but it is His Divine Will that we "put Him in remembrance."[1] He knows our necessities before we ask ; and yet asking is not thereby rendered unnecessary. The covenant which GOD made with Noah was sure. It was not possible GOD should forget it ; and yet the rainbow is the memorial which puts Him in remembrance. "And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between GOD and every living creature."[2] As He looks upon the rainbow He remembers His covenant with Noah ; so also as He looks upon the Holy Communion presented in His Presence, He remembers the Cross and the infinite love which has purchased our salvation.

This brings us to the intercession of CHRIST in heaven, and our union with that intercession in the Holy Communion. It is important to bear in mind that CHRIST'S intercession is a priestly act, and that therefore "it is of necessity that this man also have somewhat to offer."[3] And what does He offer as He intercedes? He offers Himself ; showing His precious death in the presence of the FATHER. S. John, in a vision of heaven, saw "in the midst of the throne . . . a lamb as it had been slain."[4] It is our great High Priest seen in the act of interceding. It is not by words, but by His Presence, exhibiting on His glorified Body the marks of the death of

[1] Isa. xliii. 26. [2] Gen. ix. 16.
[3] Heb. viii. 3. [4] Rev. v. 6.

Calvary, that He pleads as our Advocate with the FATHER.

In the Jewish sacrifices there were two distinct acts; first, the slaying and offering of the victim; secondly, the sprinkling of its blood before the LORD. The two parts of the type were fulfilled in CHRIST; the first, in the death on Calvary; the second, in the presentation of Himself in heaven. The death took place once for all; but the presentation of that death by the living Saviour before the throne is continuous. By it "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."[1]

The same truth is taught by the striking expression, "The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh."[2] It is an allusion to the act of the Jewish high priest, on entering the Holy of Holies, sprinkling the blood of the slain victim before the LORD. So far as we know, he did so in silence; uttering no words; indicating that it was the blood which spoke and interceded. In the heavenly temple, the blood of sprinkling is none other than the Blood of the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world, and by its silence it ever speaks, interceding for men.

What CHRIST does in heaven, we also, in a manner, do in union with Him on earth. In heaven, He shows His death, presenting Himself as the Lamb slain. In Holy Communion we also show His death. We have nothing else to present unto the FATHER. Apart from Him and His intercession, we dare not draw nigh. Even our faith and repentance, and our efforts to do

[1] Heb. vii. 25. [2] Ibid. xii. 24.

good, by reason of our unworthiness, are not fit to offer to Him. But in Him we may offer ourselves, body, soul, and spirit; we may offer our alms; we may offer our prayers, praise, and thanksgiving. Thus we become "accepted in the Beloved."[1]

iii.

We have seen that in Holy Communion we are in the Presence of CHRIST: and that we show there His death before the FATHER. More than this: the faithful soul in this blessed Sacrament receives CHRIST Himself. S. Paul says that CHRIST is "in you, the hope of glory."[2] And the Holy Communion is the special means through which He comes to "dwell in your hearts by faith."[3]

Our LORD emphasized this truth in His discourse at Capernaum. That discourse contains startling and mysterious sayings. The subject demanded unusual language. The grace of the Sacrament is a new gift to men; and, being the fruit of the Incarnation and Atonement, is peculiar to the Christian religion.

The substance of the discourse is contained in the words, "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life."[4] What does He mean by His Flesh and Blood? He is Himself the best interpreter of His own words. In the same discourse He says, "He that eateth Me,

[1] Eph. i. 6. [2] Col. i. 27. [3] Eph. iii. 17.
[4] S. John vi. 54.

even he shall live by Me."[1] Thus He explains that by His Flesh and Blood He means Himself. To feed upon the Flesh and Blood of CHRIST is to feed upon CHRIST Himself. It is to receive Him in all that He is in His ascended life of glory. The Saviour Who gives Himself to us is not the dead CHRIST, but He Who was dead and is alive for evermore. The soul that thus receives Him dwelleth in CHRIST and CHRIST in him. The life of CHRIST becomes his life. He feeds upon the very life of CHRIST, not merely on its symbol.

Such is the mystery of this Divine blessing that it cannot be really known by argument, reasoning, or definition. It is a thing to appropriate by personal experience. Some there were at Capernaum who said "This is an hard saying"; and because of it "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."[2] In that frame of mind, it was not possible for them ever to learn the mystery of Divine grace.

Even to the eleven faithful Apostles, we may well believe, the saying was an hard one. But they loyally clave to their LORD. Whatever the strange saying might signify, they doubted not it expressed some great spiritual truth; and they were confident that some day they would be able to enter into its meaning.

They were not disappointed. They learnt, in a measure, what our LORD had meant, as they were gathered together with Him in the upper room; and He, taking the bread and giving it to

[1] S. John vi. 57. [2] Ibid. 60, 66.

them, said, "Take, eat, this is My Body." But it was not until the Day of Pentecost, and the descent of the HOLY GHOST to be the indwelling life of the Church, that they became conscious of its true import. It was the result of the Church's first Communion. Though no record of that memorable event has been handed down to us, yet we may try to picture the scene. We ask, Who was the celebrant at that first Communion? Was it S. Peter, the foremost among the twelve? Was it S. John, the disciple whom JESUS loved? Was it S. James, who was destined to be the first bishop of Jerusalem? We cannot tell. But we may be sure that all those who knelt at that primitive altar remembered the discourse at Capernaum; yes, and now for the first time entered into its deep meaning. Here they received the Body and Blood of their LORD: they fed upon Him in their hearts: they felt in themselves the blessedness of partaking of the heavenly food.

"Grant us therefore, gracious LORD, so to eat the Flesh of Thy dear SON JESUS CHRIST, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."[1]

[1] Prayer of Humble Access in Communion Service.

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